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# ANNEXATION OF BURMA

*By the same author*

RAJPUT STUDIES

PESHWA MADHAV RAO I

THE EASTERN  
FRONTIER OF BRITISH INDIA

# ANNEXATION OF BURMA

BY

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A. MUKHERJEE & BROS.  
2, COLLEGE SQUARE,  
CALCUTTA

**FIRST EDITION**

*February, 1944*

Price Rs. 7/- only

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Published by A. Mukherjee, 2, College Square, Calcutta, and  
printed by S. C. Bose at the Bose Press,  
30, Brojonath Mitra Lane, Calcutta.



## PREFACE

The declaration of war by Japan against the British Empire and the United States of America in December, 1941, the conquest of Burma, and the threat to India from the east, have painfully demonstrated the great importance which should be attached to the eastern frontier of this country from the politico-military point of view. The North-West can no longer monopolise the attention of the defenders of India, nor can serious students of frontier policy, which constitutes so large and vital a part of our national history, confine their study to the routes taken by Alexander and his followers. It is to be deplored that historians of British India have so far concentrated their attention on northern, western, and southern India ; they have been altogether indifferent to the strange events which culminated in the Burmese Wars and resulted in the incorporation of Assam and Burma in the British Empire. Some years ago I realised the importance of this neglected subject, and the composition of the present volume, as well as that of its predecessor, *The Eastern Frontier of British India*, was finished a few months before the declaration of war by Japan. Circumstances beyond my control delayed the publication of these two volumes for more than two years. *The Eastern Frontier of British India* was published in September, 1943. I now submit the present volume to the public, strengthened by the conviction that a pioneer's defects deserve more charity and indulgence than is usually accorded to those who follow the lead of veteran scholars and deal with well-known subjects.

In this volume I have not tried to narrate the history of Burma ; my purpose is to describe in some detail the policy pursued by the British Government towards the rulers of Burma. I have dealt with the subject from the British Indian point of view. The internal history of Burma has been altogether excluded, except in so far as references to internal conditions were found necessary to explain the attitude adopted by British authorities towards particular questions.

A detailed account of the materials used in the composition of this volume will be found in the Bibliography. I have relied entirely on original sources, mainly unpublished official documents. No statement made by secondary authorities, contemporary or later, has been accepted, unless it is supported by positive documentary evidence. But I have avoided references to the sources in the foot notes, partly to economise the consumption of paper, partly to relieve the general reader, who is usually scared away by voluminous foot notes.

In reply to those readers of mine who look upon quotations from documents with disfavour, I would take shelter behind the following observations of Mr. Churchill, one of the greatest living masters of historical narrative: "I have tried as far as possible to tell the story through the lips of actors or from the pens of contemporary writers, feeling sure that a phrase struck out at the time is worth many coined afterwards." (*Marlborough*, Vol. III, p. 10).

Once again it is my pleasant duty to acknowledge my debt to my teacher, Dr. Surendra Nath Sen, M.A., Ph.D., B.Litt.,

Keeper of the Records of the Government of India, who made it possible for me to secure with astonishing rapidity thousands of pages of transcripts from the unpublished records preserved in the Imperial Record Department. I am also grateful to my teacher, Dr. Indubhusan Banerjee of the University of Calcutta, whose encouragement emboldened me to publish this volume in these days of paper scarcity.

A. C. BANERJEE



To

My Father

Sj. SURESH CHANDRA BANERJEE, B.A.

A sincere student and earnest  
teacher of History



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# BURMA (19th Century)

INDIA

CHINA

SIAM



# ANNEXATION OF BURMA

## CHAPTER I

### A PRELIMINARY SURVEY : ANNEXATION OF ARAKAN AND TENASSERIM

Towards the middle of the eighteenth century a new era began in the history of Burma. A vigorous royal dynasty was established by an adventurous local chief named Alaungpaya (1752-1760), who unified Upper and Lower Burma under his authority, and even carried his depredations to Manipur in the west and Siam in the south-east. His relations with the English East India Company were not very friendly. The Company had occupied Negrais in 1753, and Alaungpaya recognised this occupation by a formal treaty in 1757. The increasing political complications in India compelled the British merchants to evacuate Negrais in May, 1759. In the following October a few servants of the Company were sent to Negrais to retain a lien on the island, but they were treacherously murdered by the Burmese, who suspected that the English Company was intriguing with the Talaing rebels of Lower Burma.

Alaungpaya was succeeded by his eldest son, Naungdawgyi, who occupied the throne for three years only (1760-1763). He was visited in 1760 by an English envoy named Captain Alves, who demanded compensation for the slaughter at Negrais. The King said "he was surprised to

think how the Governor of Madras<sup>1</sup> . . . . could have the face to demand any satisfaction, which he would not give, for . . . . he looked on all that were killed at Negrais, whether guilty or innocent, as born to die there." Later on he relented, released the half dozen English captives, mostly survivors of the massacre, gave full liberty to trade, and signified his willingness to grant commercial sites anywhere in return for arms and ammunition. It appeared, however, that trade was no longer to be duty free, as under the treaty of 1757, and that the head-quarters of the Company must be transferred from Negrais to Bassein. The King wanted to keep the English at a place where he could easily control them ; Negrais was too remote and beyond his effective authority. Bassein, however, was too far from the sea—about 70 miles—to be a convenient centre for the English merchants. They preferred Rangoon.

It was the conquest of Arakan in 1784-85 by King Bodawpaya (1782-1819) that marked a new era in the history of Anglo-Burmese relations. For many centuries Arakan had been an independent kingdom, and its political and cultural relations with Bengal had been very intimate. In 1785 Arakan was constituted a province of the Burmese Empire and placed under a Burmese-Governor who resided at Mrohaung, the old capital of the Arakanese princes. The people of Arakan, who were known in Bengal as *Mags*, now became victims of Burmese cruelty. Some of them crossed the river Naf, the

<sup>1</sup> In those days the Company's factories in Burma lay "within the jurisdiction of the Madras Presidency.

boundary between Arakan and the British district of Chittagong, and took refuge in the Company's territory. They were accepted as British subjects, and some of them were provided with waste land for cultivation.

The Burmese naturally resented the emigration of their subjects, and during the period 1786-1824 there were numerous occasions when they threatened to violate British territory in pursuit of the fugitives. Their movements were facilitated by the unsatisfactory condition of the frontier between Chittagong and Arakan. The most important post within British jurisdiction beyond the town of Chittagong was Ramu, about 25 miles from the Bay of Bengal. A navigable rivulet passed by this post ; boats carrying 600 *maunds* of rice could proceed through this stream from Chittagong to Ramu. The land route was difficult ; heavy loads and guns could hardly be sent by land from Chittagong to Ramu. The territory lying between Ramu and the Naf was covered by hills and jungles and intersected by rivulets. The ground was so low and flat that it was completely inundated during the rains. The troops took an hour to march one mile. Only a few *bighas* of land were under cultivation. There were no shops and no provisions were available. A competent military observer remarked that the whole region was in 'a perfect state of wilderness'. "The state of this frontier," reported a military officer after local inspection, "by being covered with jungle, is peculiarly well adapted to the desultory inroads of our neighbours, and while it remains so, they may lie concealed, make sudden irruptions, and retire with impunity."

## ANNEXATION OF BURMA

The troubles on the Chittagong-Arakan frontier reached their climax in 1823, when some Burmese troops occupied the small island of Shahpuri, which lies on the British side of the main channel of the Naf. Lord Amherst, the then Governor-General, tried to reach an amicable settlement with the Burmese Government, but his patience was exhausted when two British naval officers were treacherously seized by four Burmese Ministers sent by the King to deal with the dispute.

Meanwhile hostilities had broken out in Assam.

Upper Assam had for many centuries been an independent State ruled by Ahom Kings. The internal condition of this principality towards the close of the eighteenth century revealed many symptoms of disintegration. Gautinath Singh (1780-1794) has been rightly described as 'the most incompetent, blood-thirsty, disreputable, and cowardly of all the Ahom Kings'. Unable to suppress internal rebellions, he sought for the intervention of the East India Company. In 1792 the Government of Bengal sent a detachment under Captain Welsh to restore peace and order in the Ahom State. The expedition was successful in re-establishing the King's authority. As the British Government did not cover territorial expansion in those days, Captain Welsh left Assam in 1794. His departure was followed by the revival of anarchy, which gave the Burmese a good opportunity for occupying Upper Assam. During the years 1817-1822 the Burmese expelled Chandrakanta Singh and Purandar Singh—two rival candidates for the Ahom throne—

and devastated the Brahmaputra valley. Soon the north-eastern frontier of Bengal felt the shock ; some British villages were plundered by the Burmese in 1821.

The problem created by the consolidation of Burmese authority in Upper Assam could not be evaded by the British rulers of Bengal. The Governor-General's Agent for the North-Eastern Frontier observed, "The substitution of a war-like, and comparatively speaking, powerful government in the place of the feeble administration that has hitherto ruled Assam, in a situation so commanding and with such extensive means of offence, will no doubt render it necessary that some permanent measures should be adopted for the security of the frontier and of the country in the lower part of the Brahmaputra, Meghna and Ganges." In a private letter he gave a lurid picture of the Burmese menace : "There is nothing now to prevent them from sacking Dacca and plundering all the adjoining districts, nor have our troops half the chance of being able to meet or overtake them that we had with the Pindaris,<sup>1</sup> and were they provided plentifully with good fire arms, the superior discipline of our troops would avail us very little in that sort of warfare that may be carried on during half the year in this part of the country in boats. . . . As for a knowledge of the rivers in Bengal, our boatmen are far behind the Burmese, for there is not a creek

<sup>1</sup> The Pindaris were predatory hordes who devastated Central India during the early part of the nineteenth century. "They had neither the tie of religious nor of national feeling. They were men of all lands and all religions." They were suppressed by Lord Hastings (Governor-General) in 1817-18.

or rivulet navigable in the rains between Chittagong and Hardwar that they are not perfectly acquainted with."

In those days there were three small principalities in Assam—Cachar,<sup>1</sup> Jaintia,<sup>2</sup> and Manipur. They were practically independent, although occasionally they had to acknowledge formal obedience to the Ahom Kings. Manipur was almost a constant prey to Burmese invasions. In 1819 the ruler of Manipur was expelled, and the principality was brought under Burmese occupation. A similar fate would certainly have befallen Cachar but for Lord Amherst's timely intervention. He concluded an alliance with Govinda Chandra, the helpless ruler of this petty principality. The strategic importance of Cachar was thus explained by the Governor-General in a Secret Letter to the Court of Directors : "One of the easiest passes from Ava<sup>3</sup> into the Company's possessions is through Manipur and Cachar . . . . the occupation of the latter is essential to the defence of that pass. . . . . The recent progress of the Burmese arms, and their permanent occupation of Assam, . . . . give the possession of Cachar an importance under present circumstances which did not before belong to it." For similar reasons a treaty was concluded with Ram Singh of Jaintia.

"The Burmese resented the establishment of British sovereignty over Cachar and Jaintia. On January 17, 1824,

<sup>1</sup> Now a British district in Assam, with its head-quarters at Silchar.

<sup>2</sup> Now part of a British district in Assam.

<sup>3</sup> Ava had once been the capital of Burma. It is frequently used in British official documents to denote Burma as a whole.

a clash took place between British and Burmese forces in the village of Vikrampur (45 miles east of Sy~~h~~het town) in which the Burmese were defeated. On February 13, another engagement was fought at Badarpur,<sup>1</sup> and the Burmese were compelled to retreat. The dispute regarding Shahpuri made the situation worse. War was formally declared on March 5, 1824.

At that time the throne of Burma was occupied by Bagyidaw, a grandson of Bodawpaya. Before his accession to the throne Bagyidaw had expressed friendly feelings for the English, but a change seems to have come over him after his grandfather's death. Probably he considered it necessary to continue the aggressive policy which he had inherited. There are also reasons to assume that his policy was influenced to a great extent by the audacity of his court and the optimism of his subjects. Henry Gouger, an Englishman who went to Burma in 1822, attributed the outbreak of war 'primarily to a desire, on the part of the Burman Court, to try its strength with the British.' The King's brother<sup>2</sup> told an American missionary named Judson, "You are strong by sea and not by land. We are skilled in making trenches and *abbatis*, which the English do not understand." Less responsible persons held still more unfavourable views about British soldiers. They were considered to be 'luxurious and effeminate, incapable of standing the fatigues of war, and therefore unable to contend with a people hardy like themselves (*i.e.*, the Burmese), who

<sup>1</sup> Now an important junction on the Bengal and Assam Railway.

<sup>2</sup> Tharrawaddy, who later on became King. See Chapter II.

could carry on war with little food and no shelter.' The King was led to believe that his troops would easily march to England. The chains in which the Governor-General was to be brought to the King were coated with gold. "It was not the King who led the people but the people who led the King into war."

The war continued for two years (March, 1824—February, 1826). There were four theatres of war—Assam, Arakan, the lower valley of the Irrawaddy, and Tenasserim. Gambhir Singh, one of the claimants to the throne of Manipur, played an important part in the military operations in Assam, and expelled the Burmese from his ancestral principality. In the other three theatres of war the British army received considerable assistance from the navy. In the Arakan region a small British detachment suffered a severe defeat in the battle of Ramu (May, 1824), but the whole province was occupied by March, 1825. In the lower valley of the Irrawaddy the operations were conducted by the leader of the expedition, Sir Archibald Campbell. Rangoon was occupied 'without having had occasion to discharge a single musket.' After encountering many obstacles, specially geographical and climatic, the British army arrived at Yandabo, a village within four days' march from Amarapura, the capital of Burma, where a treaty of peace was concluded on February 24, 1826. Meanwhile the maritime province of Tenasserim had been conquered.

By Article 2 of the treaty of Yandabo, the King of Burma 'renounced all claims upon . . . the principality of



## THE AVA MEDAL

*Presented to the troops engaged  
in the Burmese War*



Assam and its dependencies, and also upon the contiguous petty states of Cachar and Jyntea.' He also recognised Gambhir Singh as the ruler of Manipur. Instead of annexing Assam Lord Amherst divided it into three parts. Matak (modern Lakhimpur district) was left under the rule of a local chief, who acknowledged the supremacy of the British Government and agreed to supply 300 soldiers in time of war. Sadiya was placed under the rule of a Khampti chief, who acknowledged British supremacy. The rest of Assam was temporarily placed under the charge of British officers, but in 1833 it was restored to Purandar Singh, who agreed to pay an annual tribute to the Company, and to 'listen with attention to the advice' of British Political Agents. As he could not pay the tribute regularly, his territory was annexed in 1838. Matak was annexed in 1839, and Sadiya in 1842. Thus the whole of Upper Assam came under British rule.

After the expulsion of the Burmese Govinda Chandra remained the ruler of Cachar in accordance with his treaty with the British Government. He was assassinated in 1830. As he left no heir, his territory was annexed to the Company's possessions in 1832. After the death of Ram Singh, who had been recognised by Lord Amherst as the vassal ruler of Jaintia, his territory was annexed (1835). Manipur remained in the possession of Gambhir Singh and his descendants.

By Article 3 of the treaty of Yandabo the King of Burma ceded the province of Arakan to the Company. The Arakan Yoma Mountains were recognised as the boundary between British India and Burma. Even towards the end of the

first year of the war Lord Amherst was unwilling to annex Arakan. He wanted that Arakan should be liberated from the Burmese yoke and re-established as an independent principality. In May, 1825, he changed his opinion and suggested that the annexation of Arakan was necessary 'as inflicting a severe but well-merited loss on our enemy and as materially contributing to our own future security'. He thought that the mere cession of Assam would not be regarded by 'European or native spectators' as 'an equivalent for the sacrifices and efforts' of the British Government, and the Burmese would not be 'deterred from future aggression when they found so little atonement required for past injury and insult'. Finally, he observed that "a country possessing a comparatively robust and hardy population will be much more desirable as a frontier territory than the fertile and unwarlike province of Bengal." The annexation of Arakan was, therefore, decided upon. But it was not regarded as a profitable acquisition from the financial point of view. The first British administrator of Arakan observed in 1826, "As a source of revenue Arakan has never been contemplated as a useful possession, all the advantages anticipated from its annexation to our empire being comprised in the exclusion of the Burmese from a province where the local peculiarities enabled them to disturb the tranquillity of the contiguous country."

By Article 4 of the treaty of Yandabo the King of Burma ceded the province of Tenasserim to the Company. This proved to be an unprofitable acquisition on the part of the

British Government. Every year the Supreme Government had to bear an expense of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  'lakhs of rupees for this province, and this charge was likely to increase, since buildings, barracks, fortifications, etc. were required. In 1826 the Court of Directors suggested the retrocession of the province to Burma, but the measure was not insisted upon, on the expectation that a large number of Burmese subjects would migrate to the ceded province. This migration was considerable at first, amounting to about 12,000 persons, but later no more arrived, and some of the original emigrants returned to Burmese territory. In 1828 the Court of Directors repeated the previous suggestion, and Lord Ellenborough, President of the Board of Control, drew up an elaborate memorandum in which he observed "that the Tenasserim provinces are an undesirable possession and regret may be expressed that we insisted upon their cession". Later on Major Henry Burney, British Resident at Ava, was instructed by the Governor-General to find out whether the King of Burma was willing to give 'some equivalent . . . in exchange for a portion or whole of the Tenasserim provinces'. After protracted negotiations Burney found that the Burmese Ministers were not prepared to give any equivalent—neither money nor territory. He reported, "The circumstance, which is well known here, of our annually sending lacs of rupees to defray the ordinary expenses of places from which under the Burmese rule the King was accustomed to realize some surplus revenue, leads all parties here to rest perfectly satisfied that, sooner or later, we must restore these provinces to Ava,

and that the exercise of a little patience is all that is required on the part of the Ministers of this country to promote the attainment of their wishes." Under these circumstances the British Government had no other alternative but to tolerate the recurring losses. In 1833 orders arrived from the Court of Directors authorising the Government of India to retain the Tenasserim province permanently.

For various reasons Lord Amherst had decided not to demand the cession of the province of Pegu. He did not like to undertake the responsibility of defending it against Burmese aggression. A contemporary official observes, "Pegu once incorporated into our possessions, a trespass upon its integrity must be resented as promptly as that infringement of our Bengal frontier out of which the war in progress had arisen. The possession of Pegu was likely to lead to a speedy renewal of war with Ava, and an eventual rupture with Siam, a state little likely to prefer us as neighbours to its co-religionists, the Burmese." But Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of Madras, favoured the restoration of Talaing rule in Pegu.<sup>1</sup> He wrote, "I would have left a corps of about six thousand men in the country until their government and military force were properly organised ; five or six years would have been fully sufficient . . . and we could then have gradually withdrawn the whole of our force . . . Pegu is so fertile, and has so many natural advantages, that it would in a few years have been a more powerful state than Ava."

<sup>1</sup> King Alaungpaya had conquered Pegu after overthrowing Talaing rule there.

But this eminent statesman overlooked some important facts. Wilson, the first historian of the Burmese War, observes, "The people (of Pegu) were very much mixed with the Burman race, and their character indicated neither personal intrepidity, nor national spirit, which could have been relied upon as available in undertaking their defence ; neither did it appear that any individual of rank or influence existed, round whom the population would have rallied, as the common object of their reverence or attachment." Moreover, although the King had reluctantly agreed to the cession of Arakan, 'no coercion' could have induced him to give up Pegu; "therefore that province was to be taken without treaty, and to be held by sheer force."<sup>1</sup>

Three articles of the treaty of Yandaboo remain to be discussed. By Article 5 the Burmese King agreed to pay the sum of one crore of rupees 'in proof of the sincere disposition of the Burmese Government to retain the relations of peace and amity between the two nations, and as part indemnification to the British Government for the expences of the war'. There is no doubt that this article fell very heavily on the Burmese. 'Probably the King was rich enough to pay the money from his own funds, but no minister had the 'hardihood' to suggest that 'the sum should be taken from the Royal coffers.' As a result, the Ministers had to raise it 'by voluntary or compulsory contributions'. The last instal-

<sup>1</sup> When Lord Dalhousie annexed Pegu after the Second Burmese War, King Mindon did not sign a treaty ; the annexation was effected by Proclamation. See Chapter V.

ment was paid in 1833. A contemporary official says, "Any one who had seen our paymaster standing like Brennus before a rude pair of scales, and receiving, by weight alone, costly trinkets of really beautiful workmanship, would have felt that the vanquished were humbled to the uttermost that a civilised and Christian power could desire . . . ."

By Article 11 the King agreed to return to the 'British authorities 'all British, whether European or Native, American, and other prisoners'. Several thousands of Manipuri and Assamese captives were kept as slaves in different parts of Burma. When Crawfurd demanded their release, the Burmese ministers argued that the treaty referred merely to prisoners of war—not to those former subjects of the Burmese King who might have been brought to Burma before the war. The argument was probably technically correct. Crawfurd failed to secure the release of these unfortunate slaves, and for this he was censured by the Supreme Government.

Article 7 of the treaty of Yandabo provided that 'a Commercial Treaty, upon principles of reciprocal advantage, will be entered into' by the British and Burmese Governments. Accordingly, in September, 1826, John Crawfurd was deputed as envoy to the Court of Ava. He had an audience of the King on October 20. He says, "The appearance of a British Mission at Ava, although specifically provided for by the Treaty of Peace, had excited a good deal of uneasiness on the part of the Court, and much alarm among the people. Our little party of less than thirty Europeans

had been magnified by rumour into some hundreds, and from such a force the capital itself was scarcely thought to be safe—so deep an impression had the superiority of European arms produced upon the "nation at large!"

The Burmese Ministers were, however, shrewd enough to reject all drafts prepared by the British envoy and to impose upon him a treaty prepared by themselves. Crawfurd explains the advantages secured by the treaty to the British Government in the following words:

"The first article of the convention stipulates generally for a free commercial intercourse between the subjects of the two Governments, and for protection to the persons and property of those engaged in trade. . . .

By the second article of the treaty all British vessels, not exceeding fifty tons burthen, or thereabouts, are exempted from the payment of tonnage duties and port charges. . . . The privilege thus secured to us may, it is hoped, give rise to a coasting trade of some value and extent between the Burmese ports and our various settlements in the Bay of Bengal.

The third article secures some advantages to British merchants resident in the Burman dominions, although far short of those required by the justice and necessity of the case..

According to the Burman laws, all vessels ship-wrecked upon the coast are forfeited, and become the property of the King. This arbitrary and unjust law is cancelled by the fourth and last article of the convention, which stipulates for British property ship-wrecked the same immunity and protection as under civilized governments."

There is no doubt that the treaty of Yandabo was very unpopular in Burma. With reference to Crawfurd's Mission Lord William Bentinck observes, "The very sound of the word treaty appears to have excited all the fears and suspicions of the Court of Ava, and the King himself, when told the object of Mr. Crawfurd's Mission, is said to have cried out, What! Is he come to make another Yandabo Treaty with us?" Major Burney wrote in 1837, "It is well known that nothing but dire necessity forced the late Government of Ava to agree to the Treaty of Yandabo, and that it always intended to take the first opportunity of releasing itself from the engagements it had so unwillingly entered into." On one occasion Burney told a Burmese Minister that the British and the Burmese, being better acquainted with each other, were less likely to engage in hostilities again. The Minister answered with a laugh, "Yes, we only want one more trial for the sake of revenge." The feelings of the common people Burney found to be 'very rancorous and sore' against the English.<sup>1</sup> This feeling of hostility reached its culmination after the accession of Tharrawaddy, as we shall see in the next chapter.

<sup>1</sup> A detailed account of the incidents referred to in this chapter, and a full description of the military and naval operations, will be found in the present author's book entitled *The Eastern Frontier of British India*.



## CHAPTER II

### THE RESIDENCY AND AFTER

Article 7 of the treaty of Yandabo provided that "accredited ministers, retaining an escort or safeguard of fifty men, from each shall reside at the *Darbar* of the other, who shall be permitted to purchase or to build a suitable place of residence, of permanent materials." An experienced contemporary British official describes this clause as the 'real blot' in the treaty. The reception of envoys, says he, was 'a measure repulsive to all Indo-Chinese nations'. In 1836 the King of Burma received a letter from the Emperor of China, which contained the following remarks: "It is not proper to allow the English . . . to remain in the City. They are accustomed to act like the Pipal<sup>1</sup> tree! Let not Younger Brother<sup>2</sup> therefore allow the English to remain in his country "

John Crawfurd was the first British Resident in the Court of Ava in accordance with Article 7 of the treaty of Yandabo. When he arrived at Hęzada (September 8, 1826) he found that the Burmese were very reluctant 'to admit the residence of a permanent diplomatic agent, and especially to the military guard of fifty men'. The Chief Officer of the town

<sup>1</sup> "Whenever this plant takes root and particularly in old temples and buildings it spreads and takes such firm hold that it is scarcely possible to be removed or eradicated."

<sup>2</sup> King of Burma, the Emperor of China being the Elder Brother.

contended that the British Resident should live at Rangoon, and not at Ava. The English version of the treaty provided that 'the accredited minister' should reside 'at the *Darbar*', but the Burmese version provided that the British Agent was to live 'in the royal city of Burma'. The Chief Officer of Henzada argued that Rangoon was a 'royal city'. Crawfurd refused to accept this 'singular and unexpected' construction of the treaty, and proceeded to the capital. He remained there for ten weeks (September 30—December 12, 1826). He left Ava without communicating with the Supreme Government. For this he was officially censured.

For the next three years no Resident was sent to the Court of Ava. In a minute dated December 30, 1829, Lord William Bentinck expressed the view that it was necessary to continue diplomatic relations with Burma. A Resident living at Ava, he thought, could 'gradually remove from the minds of our opponents the sore and angry feelings left there by defeat, assure them of the sincerity of our desire of cultivating friendly relations and keep our Government well-informed of the real view and state of parties at the capital'. Accordingly Major Henry Burney was sent to Ava as Resident in 1830. With regard to his general duties he received the following instructions from the Government:

"... you should make no proposition but encourage the Burmese to disclose their views and make first overtures on all occasions, and ... you should quietly make it your study to ascertain and report for the information of Government the state of parties at Ava and the real views of the King

and Courtiers, and endeavour to obtain some influence over the Court, and above all to establish a free intercourse between yourself and our possessions both in Arakan and Tenasserim."

Burney arrived at Ava on April 24, 1830. He was welcomed, and on the whole treated with respect. When the time came for his formal reception by the King,<sup>1</sup> the 'Shoe Question' created trouble. He was required to remove his shoes when he came near the Royal Council building. He objected, and submitted a memorial to the King. He says, "My objection to removing my shoes is founded on the fact that the Burmese require it not as the fulfilment of a mere custom, but as a means of exalting their King and gratifying their own pride and vanity by humiliating and degrading the British character." After a regular tug-of-war between the Resident and the Burmese Ministers, it was decided that Burney should appear before the King without shoes on an ordinary day.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the presentation to the King took place on June 17, 1830. Burney then visited the Heir-apparent, the Prince of Tharrawaddy, the only full brother of the King, and some other influential persons.

<sup>1</sup> Burney describes King Bagyidaw in the following words :

"The King is a poor weak fool, incapable of comprehending any rational argument, and prone to adopt the suggestions of any silly or mischievous courtier rather than the advice of a sensible minister."

<sup>2</sup> "It was custom with the Burmese to present foreign agents to the King on a Kadaw day, so as to impress the people with the superiority of His Burmanic Majesty over all monarchs. Even the envoys of the Emperor of China were subjected to this indignity. The British envoys, Symes (in 1795) and Crawfurd (in 1826) had also submitted to this treatment."

Burney acted as British Resident in Burma for eight years (April, 1830—March, 1838). During this fairly long period he had to deal with numerous diplomatic questions, some of which were settled satisfactorily from the British point of view.

The question of the payment of the indemnity came for discussion soon after Burney's arrival at Ava. At that time a balance of about 12 *lakhs* of rupees was still outstanding. Burney began to press the Burmese Ministers for immediate payment, but they evaded the issue on various excuses. In August, 1830, Burney demanded a definite agreement, and declared that he would leave Ava if the agreement was not forthcoming by a certain date. The Ministers did not take this warning seriously. So Burney left the city on the appointed date. Within two hours of his departure some Burmese officers overtook him and a satisfactory arrangement was made. The Resident returned to Ava. The Governor-General censured him for 'proceeding further than could be considered proper without specific orders': "His Lordship thinks it would have been prudent to have limited your representations to a refusal to hold further communication until the point at issue could be referred for the orders of superior authority, instead of committing yourself to a measure so difficult to retrieve if once carried into effect, as actual retirement from the capital." However, Burney's strenuous efforts succeeded in securing the last instalment in February, 1833.

Soon after the conclusion of the treaty of Yandabo the

Burmese began to commit outrages in British territory on the Moulmein frontier. There were reasons to believe that the Burmese Chief of Martaban was secretly in touch with the bandits. In 1829 British troops advanced into the interior from Moulmein, and burnt down Martaban and some Burmese villages. On his arrival at Ava Burney found that the Ministers had taken offence at the drastic reprisals taken by the British authorities. After frank conversations on the subject with the Ministers Burney was able to secure the removal of the Martaban Chief. Similar complaints came also from Arakan. After protracted negotiations Burney succeeded in persuading the Ministers to take proper steps for the prevention of outrages committed by Burmese subjects in British territory.

We have already referred to the question of the retrocession of Tenasserim. In October, 1831, the Burmese Ministers raised an important question in connection with the boundary of the province of Tenasserim. Article 4 of the treaty of Yandabo recognised the river Salween as the boundary between British and Burmese territory. But the same Article appeared to modify this provision by permitting the British to take only the districts of Tenasserim, Tavoy, Mergui, and Ye. The British had, however, taken possession of Moulmein and some other places *east* of the Salween. The Burmese Ministers demanded that, as the British had no right to the Martaban district, they should return those places. When Burney refused to admit this claim, the Ministers argued that the matter should be decided by a joint boundary com-

mission in accordance with Articles 3 and 4 of the treaty of Yandabo. Burney replied that he was prohibited by his instructions from discussing this point. When the Burmese Ministers began to press their claim, he sent them a written reply, in which he clearly stated that during the negotiations culminating in the treaty of Yandabo the Salween had definitely been fixed as the boundary irrespective of the limits of the Martaban district. The Ministers made a vigorous protest, saying, "The Treaty says one thing, Major Burney another."

Burney was instructed by the Supreme Government to look after the interests of the British subjects in Burma. One paragraph of his letter of instructions ran as follows: "And I hereby authorise you to receive complaints from all British subjects residing in the dominions of the King of Ava, in the subject of injuries received by them from the Government or subjects of Ava, and to make such representations theron to the King and Ministers as you may judge advisable". But it was added that "it is not the desire of the Governor-General-in-Council that you should interfere in any such matter whenever the established laws of the country are adequate to afford the parties redress." The Resident was also expected to foster Indo-Burmese trade: "The Governor-General also desires, that your attention should be given to the trade of Ava with a view to reporting to his Lordship-in-Council the practicability of extending and facilitating British commerce and the consumption of British manufactures." There are numerous cases on record in which Burney inter-

vened successfully for the protection of Indian and Armenian merchants in Burma. His presence gave them such security as they had never known before. The result was that the number of Indian and Armenian merchants in Burma increased considerably, and British goods found an expanding market in that country. Burney says, "The importation of British' goods into this country and particularly into the capital has been vastly increased since the residence of a British officer here."

Soon after Burney's arrival at Ava' the Burmese Government decided to send an embassy to Calcutta. Two envoys were selected in August, 1830, and they were entrusted with the following duties: (1) To demand the restoration of the Kubo valley. (2) To demand the restoration of those parts of the Martaban district which lay east of the Salween. (3) To demand the abrogation of Article 7 of the treaty of Yandabo providing for the appointment of Residents. "The two countries," so ran the letter of instructions, "have no cause for distrusting each other, and therefore it would be better for the English and Burmese Chiefs to withdraw the men stationed by each, and to send Royal and friendly letters to each other once in five years, and in this manner keep open the communication and intercourse between the two countries and cultivate friendship." The envoys were verbally instructed to demand the retrocession of Tenasserim and Arakan. They reached Calcutta on December 6, 1830. As the Governor-General was then on tour in Upper India, they could not meet him before November, 1832. Their demand

with regard to the Kubo valley was satisfied, but in all other respects they "were disappointed." They left Calcutta in June, 1833.

Burney's relations with King Bagyidaw were, on the whole, friendly, but the Resident was convinced that the King would soon take recourse to hostilities for the recovery of the lost provinces. He wrote to the Supreme Government in December, 1830, "Having in some of my former reports expressed an opinion that the present King of Ava will take the first favourable opportunity of engaging in another contest with us, I beg to take the present occasion of submitting a more detailed statement of the grounds upon which I have formed that opinion. The King and those about him are manifestly dissatisfied with the present state of things. Nothing shows this more decidedly than the eagerness with which they listen to any tales brought here of disasters suffered by us in India or of hostilities projected against us by Runjeet Singh or any other chief, and their ignorance of the real superiority of our power and resources is very great . . . All here are certain that Ava will rise again from her present reduced condition . . . and not only the King's Court but the lower ranks of the people and even many of the inhabitants of the Tenasserim provinces firmly believe that in the last war it was our turn to conquer, but that in the next contest it will be the turn of Ava." The Ministers were paying great attention to the re-organisation of the military forces. The Governors of Prome, Bassein, and other cities in the Delta were appointed as military chiefs (*Bo*) who had

'the power to call out the inhabitants of their districts to meet armed at any point they pleased'. The civil administration was also improved. Burney says, "This Government now shows some deference to the feelings and opinions of the governed. An apprehension that its subjects may remove into our territories is secretly influencing it to treat the people with extraordinary mildness and indulgence ; and this is the principal cause why so few Burmese have emigrated to Arakan or to the Tenasserim provinces since the conclusion of the war."

Such reports from the Resident naturally attracted the serious notice of the Supreme Government. In a Minute dated June 24, 1831, Lord William Bentinck observed, "In the meantime, to intimidate the Burmese from manifesting the hostile feeling towards us, which they are reputed to foster, and to convince them of their error in supposing us so exhausted and embarrassed as to submit to concessions, rather than venture a fresh conflict, we must seek the best military position on the Ava frontiers and show that we are prepared, and as determined as prepared, not only to repel but chastise aggression."

In April, 1832, Burney left Ava for Rangoon for the purpose of recomposing his health. His place was temporarily taken by Blundell, Deputy Commissioner of Tenasserim. The Governor-General expressed his appreciation of Burney's work in a letter dated September 8, 1831, "The acknowledgement of His Lordship and of the British Government are due to this officer for the uncommon zeal with which he has

discharged the arduous and responsible duties with which he was entrusted at the sacrifice of his health and personal comforts."

While at Rangoon, Burney continued to hold the office of Resident; at Ava three officers—Blundell (April—September, 1832), Captain Macfarquhar (September, 1832—August, 1833), and Captain McLeod (August—November, 1833)—successively worked as his deputy. It was during this period that the bitter dispute about the Kubo valley was brought to a close. Towards the close of the First Burmese War, Gambhir Singh had succeeded in occupying not only the Manipur valley proper but also the Kubo valley, lying to the east of the former boundary of the Manipur State, and inhabited by Shans. The Burmese Government refused to agree to the inclusion of the Kubo valley in Gambhir Singh's dominions, claiming that it was an integral part of the Burmese Empire. Within a few weeks of the conclusion of the treaty of Yandabo some Burmese troops crossed the river Ningtee and entered the disputed valley, but they soon retired into Burmese territory of their own accord. Instead of taking hostile measures Gambhir Singh submitted the matter to the decision of the British Government. For about eight years the matter formed a subject of controversy between the Governments of India and Burma. The authorities in Calcutta supported the claim of Gambhir Singh until, in 1832, Burney submitted a confidential report in favour of the Burmese claim. In his letter dated July 5, 1832, he pointed out that the disputed valley had been in possession

of the Burmese since 1370 A.D. Lord William Bentinck thereupon decided to return the Kubo valley to Burma. The transfer took place in January, 1834. Gambhir Singh reluctantly accepted the decision of the British Government. In order to compensate Manipur for this loss Bentinck agreed to give the Raja a monthly stipend of Rs. 500. This stipend is still enjoyed by the Raja of Manipur.

Burney returned to Ava in November, 1833. But his own ill-health, and the difficulty of transacting business with the King who had been ill for some time past, made it necessary for him to leave the capital once again. He left Ava in April, 1834, and returned there in July, 1835, spending the interval at Rangoon and in Calcutta. During this period the Residency was in charge of Assistant Surgeon Bayfield. On his return to Ava Burney wanted to post Bayfield at Rangoon to take charge of the British interests there, but the Government of India did not sanction this arrangement. Complaints of injustice, extortion, and molestation began to pour into the Residency from the British, Armenian, and Indian merchants at Rangoon. In March, 1836, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce sent a petition to the Government of India, suggesting 'the propriety of appointing a Consul or Assistant Resident to protect the British commercial interests at Rangoon and its maritime dependencies'. When the matter was referred to Burney for his opinion, he submitted that a regular covenanted servant of the Company should be appointed to take charge of affairs at Rangoon. Such a step, he argued, would remove the impression which generally

prevailed in Burma that the British Government cared little about the interests of British subjects trading in that country. The Government of India appointed Bayfield to take charge of Consular duties at Rangoon, but he was not able to go to Rangoon before October, 1837. By that time Burney had left Burma for good.

In July, 1835, a Singpho Chief living within Burmese territory (in Northern Burma) attacked another Singpho Chief living within British territory (in Assam). Burney at once asked the Burmese Ministers to control the wild frontier tribes under their jurisdiction. A British officer named Captain Hannay was allowed to go to the disturbed area. The offending Singpho Chief surrendered, was brought to Ava, and reprimanded by the Ministers. Hannay collected valuable geographical and commercial information regarding Upper Burma, and returned to Ava in May, 1836. A few months later Bayfield was sent to Upper Burma with the purpose of collecting 'statistical and useful information on all subjects, but particularly on . . . . the extent and nature of the trade now carried on between China and the Burmese Dominions and between them and our territories in Assam, and the best mode of protecting, facilitating, and extending the last mentioned'. He returned to Ava in May, 1837. The activities of Hannay and Bayfield created suspicions in the Burmese Court and alarmed the Burmese population. It was believed that the British Government intended to take forcible possession of the tribal territory in Upper Burma.

In 1837 Ava witnessed a political revolution of far-

reaching importance; King Bagyidaw was overthrown by his brother, the Prince of Tharrawaddy. The details of this revolution<sup>1</sup> need not be discussed here, but it is necessary to add that throughout this crisis Burney maintained an attitude of correct neutrality. He tried in vain to bring about a reconciliation between Bagyidaw and his rebel brother, but his efforts to mitigate the sufferings of the victims of the new King's wrath were not altogether unsuccessful.

Burney soon found that it was very difficult to transact business with Tharrawaddy, "because he is so extremely uncertain and fickle: one hour, good humoured, affable, and attentive, the next harsh, peremptory and inconsiderate . . . He indulged in spirituous liquors and gambling, and his house was much resorted to by the dissolute and disreputable . . . He is further subject to fits of ungovernable passion, particularly when heated with liquor at which times also he is cruel and sanguinary."

It was clear to Burney that the new King was anxious to get rid of the treaties of 1826. In a conversation with Burney he "desired no reference should ever be made to them, that they are a matter of reproach and shame to the Burmese, that the English frightened the Burmese officers into signing them, and now always referred to them when they desired to shame the Burmese into granting anything which they desired." He added "that as there are several articles in the treaty of Yandabo which, if referred to, would create a

<sup>1</sup> See Desai, *History of the British Residency in Burma*; Chap. IX.

difference of opinion and quarrel, he thought the best plan is to throw aside these treaties and have no written engagements." On another occasion he clearly said that "the English had not conquered him or made the treaty with him and that he was determined to have nothing to say to it." Burney suggested that "if the King desired a modification in some of the articles of the treaty, the proper and established course would be to send an embassy to Bengal." Tharrawaddy replied, "I will not send an embassy to Bengal; if I send one it shall be to the King of England. I know nothing of the Goombhanee<sup>1</sup> and will not acknowledge him. He is an officer who receives pay and is not a King. Let him correspond with his equal, the Governor of Rangoon. I will receive no communication from him or in his name." Burney observed that if the King rejected the treaty of Yandabo, it might imply that he was also disputing the cession of the territories embodied in it. Tharrawaddy said with a laugh that he had no intention of seizing those territories from the Company.

In view of the definitely unfriendly attitude of the King, Burney decided that no useful purpose would be served by his residence at Ava. He thought it would be better to retire to Rangoon, leaving Bayfield to keep touch with the King and his Ministers. The King had no objection to Bayfield's residence at his capital, but he made it clear that he would not recognise him as a public officer under the treaty of

<sup>1</sup> A corruption for 'Company.' Here it refers to the Governor-General.

Yandabo. He explained his policy in the following words: "I will have nothing to say to the treaties, I will not acknowledge or grant anything to which you may find your right upon them, but in everything else you shall be treated much better than you ever were before." Burney was censured by the Supreme Government for discussing the question of the treaties with the King who was at that time too much intoxicated with his newly won power to take a serious view of political problems. Moreover, Burney's decision to remove the Residency to Rangoon was disapproved: "It is at the present juncture of the highest consequence that accurate information should reach the Governor-General-in-Council of everything that occurs at Ava if the protection of the Residency should be removed during times of so much trouble there is every reason to fear that the interests of the English and others settled in Ava will materially suffer." But Burney left Ava before this letter reached him, and arrived at Rangoon in July, 1837.

After his arrival at Rangoon Burney wrote to the Supreme Government, "One universal impression exists not only at Ava, but throughout the country, that the present King has determined to declare war against us for the purpose of recovering the territories ceded by the treaty of Yandabo and restoring the Empire of Ava to its former extent of power and dominion." Tharrawaddy was collecting arms and ammunition, recruiting new troops, and strengthening his frontier garrisons. So Burney proposed decisive action with-

out further delay : "We should proceed, if forced by the King's obstinacy, even as far as to threaten to invade his country, and we should not neglect the present opportunity of establishing a more extensive influence and control over the Court of Ava, and of placing our relations with this country on a more solid and secure footing." But the Governor-General, Lord Auckland, was 'directly and unequivocably opposed' to war with Burma. One member of his Council observed, "No event is more to be deprecated than a war with the Burmese; neither honour nor advantage would be gained by it, while the disasters of the late war, the loss of troops by the unhealthiness of the climate, and the ruinous expenses attending it, from which we are only now beginning to recover, are still fresh in our recollection." The Governor-General was apprehending troubles on the North-West; why should he precipitate hostilities on the East, when the Burmese King "was not anxious at least immediately to provoke a rupture"?

In October, 1837, Burney left Burma for Calcutta, withdrawing the Residency without orders from the Government of India. Bayfield was left at Rangoon to look after British interests in Burma, under the general superintendence of the Commissioner of Tenasserim. But the Government of India cancelled this arrangement. Bayfield was to remain at Rangoon as Acting Resident, holding communications directly with the Supreme Government. The Governor-General officially declared that Burney had mismanaged the affairs of the Residency, and the Court of Directors condemned

him for removing the Residency from Ava to Rangoon. It was decided that, in view of Burney's warlike attitude, he should not be re-employed as Resident in Burma. He resigned the Residency in March, 1838.

Tharrawaddy transferred his capital from Ava to Kyauk-Myaung in June, 1837, but he remained there for only six months. In December, 1837, Amarapura became his capital. His attitude towards the British Government remained unchanged. Lord Auckland observed in a Minute dated August 29, 1837, "I am of opinion that the King of Ava is not anxious to provoke an immediate rupture with the British Government. He will not admit himself bound by the treaty, but he will break none of its conditions. He speaks offensively and insolently. His head is turned with success and with personal vanity, yet he seems to have sufficient acuteness to take in some respects a just measure of his position and so know that this at least is not the moment at which he could prudently provoke a quarrel with us." Still the Governor-General felt that "there is undoubtedly hazard of our being at no distant period involved in war with Ava, and it is at least incumbent upon us to apply ourselves to the consideration of the measures by which either an event so much to be deprecated may be averted, or by which, if it should be forced upon us, we may be found in the best state of preparation." The garrisons on the Assam, Arakan, and Tenasserim frontiers were strengthened.

The Commander-in-Chief, Sir William Casement, wrote an elaborate minute, explaining the measures he recommended

for the defence of the Company's territories in case of a sudden invasion. He deprecated the idea of relying on the voluntary assistance of Burmese subjects who, many British officers believed, would eagerly welcome the advance of the British army in order to escape the tyranny of their ruler. Nor did he expect to draw from the invaded districts an adequate supply of provisions and carriage. He observed, "A force disembarking at Rangoon, or crossing to Martaban or descending from the Arakan mountains would be an instant signal to the rural population, under the eye of Government officers, to conceal or remove their grain, cattle, carts and boats, according to an invariable custom of the country under such circumstances." The Commander-in-Chief was aware of the severe financial strain imposed upon the Government by the First Anglo-Burmese War, but he was convinced that "liberality in all necessary equipment in the beginning will prove the best economy in the end."

If offensive operations were to be carried on against the Burmese, their territories might be assailed from five points—Assam, Manipur, Arakan, Rangoon, Moulmein. For the passage of an organised army the Assam and Manipur routes were 'quite impracticable.' But 'some stir and show of activity' in Manipur 'at the commencement of hostilities' might 'answer the purpose of distracting the enemy's attention and of forcing him to hold a portion of his troops in reserve to watch or subvert our supposed designs.' A large British army could advance into the heart of Burma from Arakan through the Aeng pass, although there were geographical difficulties

of a formidable character. In 1829 Sir Archibald Campbell reported that the arrival of a large British army on the Irrawaddy would throw the Court of Ava into such a degree of consternation as to make it submit to any dictated terms of peace. Sir William Casement shrewdly observed that "since 1829 great changes have occurred in Ava." He wrote, "Ever since the Kubo valley discussions an appeal to arms has more or less occupied the thoughts of Burmese politicians and they have not omitted to canvas the modes by which invasion is to be met. The probability of an attack from Arakan is far from being unfamiliar to the King or to his courtiers. There is little prospect indeed that the present sovereign will succumb even on the fall of his capital, if his armies remain in any quarter of his dominions unsubdued . . . he contemplates on the approach to Amarapura of a hostile army a retreat to Bhamo . . . " Hence no decisive success or final conclusion of hostilities could be expected unless the armies of the King were 'entirely broken.' This, the Commander-in-Chief apprehended, was 'not likely to be effected by the Aeng column alone in one season.' The position might be somewhat improved if another column occupied Rangoon and proceeded up the Irrawaddy, and a third column advanced from Moulmein. These two columns might unite at or near Prome or remain separate as the general in charge of the campaign might at the time deem expedient. The Commander-in-Chief concluded the minute with a strong recommendation for the annexation of Pegu.

Bayfield remained at Rangoon as Acting Resident for

more than seven months (December, 1837—July, 1838). During this period neither the King nor the Ministers held direct intercourse with him, but the Governor of Rangoon transacted business on friendly terms. Murders and gang robberies on the Martaban frontier continued to strain the relations between Blundell, Commissioner of Tenasserim, and the Burmese officers in the neighbouring districts. Lord Auckland decided to appoint a permanent Resident, and selected for this responsible post a military officer named Benson, who had no local knowledge of Burma. He was to be assisted by Captain McLeod, who had intimate acquaintance with Burma. Bayfield was to remain at Rangoon as Agent to the Resident.

The Burmese Government had expected that the Residency would not be re-established. So the new appointment was not welcomed at Amarapura. Colonel Benson arrived at Rangoon in July, 1838. The Burmese Government expected that he would stay there and transact business with the Governor of Rangoon; but the Supreme Government made it clear that the Resident would live at the capital and hold direct intercourse with the King and the Ministers. Then the Burmese Government objected to the appointment of Bayfield at Rangoon, on the ground that in the treaty of Yandabo there was provision for only one British Resident. The Government of India yielded on this point.

Benson reached Amarapura in October, 1838, and remained there till March, 1839. The arrival of the Resident was "a bitter pill to Tharrawaddy, but he was not prepared to go to

war; hence he and his Government decided to humiliate the Resident and place all manner of obstructions, difficulties, and inconveniences in his way, professing most vociferously at the same time firm friendship, so that in mere disgust the Residency might be withdrawn." The Residency was located about a mile from the town, 'on an island or tongue of land.' The place was subject to annual inundations for some months, and therefore, it was particularly unhealthy for Europeans. The accommodation provided was not sufficient. There was no market in the neighbourhood. No Burmese boatman was willing to take over any of the Residency people across the swamp surrounding the Residency. Benson's complaints merely brought evasive answers. As a matter of fact, the Burmese Government did not actually recognise him as a foreign envoy. He was never invited to meet the Ministers, nor was he favoured with audience by the King. The Governor of Rangoon put Bayfield into many troubles and even threatened to 'punish' him. Benson brought the matter to the notice of the Ministers, but no redress was available. The Government of India authorised Benson to retire from Amarapura if the attitude of the Burmese Government did not change; no stronger step could be taken in view of the war with the Afghans. Benson himself was not in favour of war with Burma, but he was convinced that 'the most eligible course would be to withdraw the Residency.' In March, 1839, he left Amarapura, handing over charge to McLeod. Bayfield was withdrawn from Rangoon, and an English merchant was placed in charge of all British property

there.. Benson's work was appreciated by the Government of India, and he was officially recognised as Resident in Burma till May, 1840.

McLeod officiated as Resident for about ten months (March, 1839—January, 1840). For about four months he remained at Amarapura and transacted some business with the Ministers. He even succeeded in securing an audience of the King. Some Muslim residents in Burma spread the rumour that the British army had met with disasters in Afghanistan. The King was thereby encouraged to put fresh humiliations upon the Resident, and some of his sons, specially the Prince of Pagan, the eldest legitimate son, advocated immediate war for the recovery of the territories lost in 1826. The Ministers, who were more in touch with the realities, tried their best to maintain peace, and succeeded. But McLeod found that his position was becoming more and more humiliating day by day. In May, 1839, he wrote to Benson, "Not only is my situation most embarrassing with matters of importance, but I am even at a loss how to conduct myself towards the Ministers and Court." Moreover, the rising river flooded the Residency grounds; all the out-houses and kitchens were submerged. No relief was available from the Ministers. McLeod at last requested them to supply boats to take him to Rangoon. To his utter amazement they replied that he could not leave Amarapura unless he was formally recalled by the Government of India. A few days later the King changed his mind, and McLeod was allowed to leave the capital. In his letter to the Government of India,

dated July 22, 1839, he observed that the King had at one stage of the crisis meditated laying violent hands upon the Residency.

McLeod arrived at Rangoon on July 31, 1839, and his action was approved by the Government of India. Lord Auckland decided that he should not leave Burma immediately. The Governor-General observed, "A short time will in all probability suffice to show whether Captain McLeod's communications to the Court, since his arrival at Rangoon, will excite merely the transient displeasure of the King, or will lead to any more decisive exhibition of hostility against us, and it will be well that the British Government should have authentic means of ascertaining the effects of those communications. It will be no doubt of advantage that Captain McLeod should remain at hand to watch and report the effect that may be produced by the late news<sup>1</sup> on the minds of the Court and the people of Ava." So McLeod awaited developments at Rangoon. One of the questions discussed by him with the Governor of Rangoon related to the depredations on the Martaban frontier.

Meanwhile Tharrawaddy was making feverish preparations for war. Arms and ammunition were collected, and troops were posted at strategic positions. Orders were issued to all officers in charge of towns to have the militia fully equipped and ready for service at a moment's notice. Tharrawaddy also tried to establish contact with the French at Chandernagore and Pondicherry. Three Frenchmen

<sup>1</sup> News of British victories in Afghanistan.

visited him at Amarapura in July, 1839. Although they were private individuals, it was widely rumoured that the French Government had sent them as envoys to the Burmese King. In December, 1839, McLeod considered it unsafe to continue his residence in Rangoon. The Governor of Rangoon treated him with marked disrespect and even asked him to vacate the house occupied by him. This was the last straw on the camel's back. On January 7, 1840, McLeod left Rangoon with all his followers. Thus closed the first chapter in the history of the British Residency in Burma.

Nothing important seems to have happened immediately after McLeod's departure from Burma. British officers in Burma found a new cause for excitement when Tharrawaddy decided to visit Rangoon. No one could explain his real motive; hence there were many surmises. The Commissioner of Tenasserim reported, "Many persons suppose that the object of the visit is that of anticipating some old prophecies of which there are said to be several. The dynasty of Alompra will, it is said, not extend beyond seven, and the present King is the seventh. By being crowned King of Pegu he may imagine he is fulfilling the prophecy. Another prediction is that a prince will make his appearance in Pegu in the present Burmese Year 1203. By coming down himself he may anticipate any impostors who might avail themselves of the prophecy. A third is that the year 1203 will see much fighting in Burma and as we are the only probable enemies he may desire to be prepared for an invasion from us . . . among the various reports in circulation

. . . is one to the effect that an attack on this place<sup>1</sup> is contemplated. I am far, however, from placing confidence in this report . . . ." But the Commissioner added, "It is well known that the King views this rising settlement<sup>2</sup> with much jealousy. It is a refuge for the oppressed and discontented of his subjects and has tended greatly to reduce the importance of Rangoon. It may, therefore, be one object of his visit to endeavour to restore the prosperity of Rangoon by making it the Royal residence for some time and to effect such injury to Moulmein as may result from posting in its neighbourhood a body of licensed plunderers<sup>3</sup> whose acts he may at any time disavow."

The Government of India instructed the Commissioner not to show suspicion of the King's intention as long as the Burmese army remained cantoned in Rangoon or in its neighbourhood. Some measures for self-defence were, however, to be adopted if a large detachment of Burmese troops was stationed 'so near to the British frontier as to lead to the probability of collision.' Even if the British frontier was threatened by the collection of a large force on the opposite side of the river the Commissioner was not authorised to take 'any military measures' but such as are of a purely defensive nature'. He was instructed 'to establish at Rangoon and in other parts of the Burmese territory some system of accurate intelligence' on which the Government could rely for the

<sup>1</sup> Moulmein.

<sup>2</sup> Moulmein.

<sup>3</sup> A detachment of the Burmese army.

formulation of their policy. Arrangements were made for sending re-inforcements to Moulmein.

Towards the close of September, 1841, the Commissioner of Tenasserim reported, "the idea of an attack on us being meditated by the King is becoming much more generally entertained; indeed, it is now difficult to ascribe any other motive for his making the immense preparations in men and material which he appears to have done." Under the circumstances the Commissioner submitted that it would be risky to postpone military measures till hostilities were actually begun by the Burmese. The King was bringing about 50,000 men with him. "Supposing", remarked the Commissioner, "him to retain half that number as his personal escort, and to direct the assembly of the remainder on the banks of the Salween, are we to allow such a movement to take place at his perfect convenience merely because no direct overt act of hostility may be committed till he is fully prepared for invasion?" He suggested that if 'undoubted evidence' was available to show that preparations were being made for invasion, 'the Burmese should be driven from the banks of the Salween and possession be taken of everything in the shape of boats wherewith a crossing of the river might be effected.'

The King arrived at Rangoon on October 2, 1841. He was accompanied by about 30,000 troops. Mr. Blundell, Commissioner of Tenasserim, reported to the Government, "the King has come down with this powerful army to try its effect on us. If he found us wavering and dis-

couraged he would attack us at once, but finding us prepared for him, he may keep up the force some months longer and then return to his capital, rejoicing at the expense and annoyance he has caused us." A letter received a few days later from the Burmese Ministers convinced Mr. Blundell that the King entertained 'a decided unfriendly feeling' towards the British Government. He wrote, "There is in it no attempt at conciliation and no word expressive of a desire to cultivate friendly understanding with us, or to take cognizance of the complaints<sup>1</sup> made against the Martaban authorities. On the contrary it appears a sulky dictatorial production seeking for grounds of cessation of all correspondence." No authentic information was, however, available about the King's real intention. It was reported that he wanted to found a new town near Rangoon.

The Government of India now felt convinced that no serious invasion was contemplated by the Burmese King. Some effective measures had, however, to be taken for the prevention of robberies committed by Burmese subjects within British territory. It was useless to bring these cases to the notice of Burmese authorities in Martaban or even to appeal to the Ministers. So the Commissioner was authorised to send troops into Burmese territory 'for the purpose of punishing specific parties, distinctly chargeable with offences of serious magnitude.' A notice might be sent to the Burmese Court, stating that "the Government of India will no longer resort to amicable representations for redress, but will employ

<sup>1</sup> About robberies committed by Burmese subjects within British territory.

its power in such place and manner as it may deem fit, for the protection of its rights and interests."

It became clear from reports emanating from different sources that, whatever the King's original plan might have been, after his arrival in Rangoon he devoted himself entirely to the foundation of a new town and the renovation of a temple. Mr. Blundell sent a friendly letter to the Burmese Ministers in Noverhber, but the Commander of the ship which carried this letter to Rangoon received a 'very uncourteous and inimical reception' there, and no reply to the letter was received by the Commissioner. Moreover, the provisions of the Commercial Treaty of 1826 were 'about to be violated by a monopoly of timber to be granted, if not already granted, to a British subject, Mr. Staig, as payment of the King's debt to him.' Finding that Mr. Blundell was growing somewhat restless, the Government ordered him to maintain a conciliatory attitude even under provocation. He was informed that the Government was then 'decidedly averse to any measures which may be calculated to lead to an open rupture with the Burmese.' The Commissioner replied, "I look on the present state of our relations with the Court of Ava as designed and brought about by the King in order to cancel existing treaties, to evince to the world generally and his own people in particular, his indifference and superiority to our power, and to cause the Government of India the greatest possible expense in the defence of the provinces wrested from his Kingdom . . . no conciliation on our part can win him, and no demonstration we may

make can terrify hostile designs on his part it appears quite hopeless now to expect that our relations with the Court of Ava can revert to any amicable footing." Even after this the Government took measures for the withdrawal of reinforcements sent to Moulmein and refused to take notice of 'the injury sustained by merchants from the establishment of a timber monopoly at Rangoon.'

Blundell still continued to send alarming reports. Stockades were being built in and around Rangoon. Fresh troops were arriving there. The officer in charge of Martaban, against whom the Commissioner of Tenasserim had repeatedly complained, was 'awarded tokens of increased favour.' The King, 'Mr. Blundell suspected, might 'commit some act of aggression that will render a war with him inevitable.' The Government of India could no longer brush aside the warnings of the man on the spot. The Commissioner was authorised, if he thought necessary, to detain those ships and troops for whose recall orders had already been issued from Calcutta.

It was not only the British officers and merchants in Tenasserim and Rangoon who eagerly looked forward to the departure of the King from his new capital. The Burmese residents of Rangoon were being terrorised by the King's troops; 'robberies and murders were daily occurrences.' Moreover, the householders were being asked to remove themselves to the new town. This transfer was likely to ruin them economically and injure their sentiments.

At last the King left Rangoon; no untoward incident took

place.. In August, 1842, it was reported that he was again coming to Rangoon with a considerable force. About the same time the Commissioner of Tenasserim received from the Government of Siam an offer of assistance against the Burmese. He suspected, however, that Siam really intended to join Burma against the English. He was informed from many sources that China was instigating both these Kingdoms against the English. His suspicion was confirmed by two facts. Siam recalled the troops she had sent sometime ago against Cochin China, but no obvious explanation for this sudden reversal of policy was available. Secondly, some Burmese officials had gone to Siam sometime ago in the guise of monks. Moreover, it was reported from Rangoon that King Tharrawaddy was collecting troops for invading China. The invasion of China was so absurd a project that even the headstrong King of Burma could hardly be expected to entertain it. Mr. Blundell thought that his real purpose was to invade Tenasserim. The Government of India took serious notice of these reports and became 'prepared when necessary to add to the military force in the Tenasserim provinces.'

Early in 1843 a Chinese Mission arrived at Amarapura, but no definite information was available about its 'true object'. The Burmese said that it was merely a ceremonial embassy "usual between the two countries on the accession of a new King to the throne, and it would seem that none such has yet been received by the present King." About the same time a French ship of war came to Rangoon. Its

aim seems to have been 'the protection and extension of French commerce and the acquisition of political and commercial information.' Blundell informed the Government that the Governor of Bourbon was very anxious to establish 'a connexion with this country.' King Tharrawaddy's officers in Rangoon received the officer deputed by the Governor of Bourbon with so much honour that Mr. Blundell felt uneasy. But the Burmese Governor of Rangoon was very disappointed when the French officer talked merely about commercial intercourse and purchased nothing more than 'a small quantity of timber'.

Meanwhile petty disputes had been going on all along the Burma-Assam frontier. Towards the close of 1843 'some English officers in Assam' demanded from the Burmese Government the surrender of certain people who had fled from Assam to Burmese territory. The Burmese Government replied that "the treaty of Yandabo contained nothing regarding the surrender of runaways, but that if it pleased the Company, the Burman Government would have no objections to a new treaty being made in which might be inserted that people who fled from either country should be mutually given up on being demanded." Lord Ellenborough (Governor-General) was, however, not at all inclined to conclude a new treaty with a King who refused to honour a treaty concluded by his predecessor.

King Tharrawaddy's stormy rule came to an abrupt conclusion in 1845, and he was succeeded by his eldest son Pagan.

## CHAPTER III

### CAUSES OF THE SECOND BURMESE WAR

Article 9 of the treaty of Yandabo ran as follows :

“The King of Ava will abolish all exactions upon British ships or vessels in Burman ports, that are not required from Burman ships or vessels in British ports; nor shall ships or vessels, the property of British subjects, whether European or Indian, entering the Rangoon river or other Burman ports, be required to land their guns or unship their rudders, or to do any other act not required of Burmese ships or vessels in British ports.”

Article I of the Commercial Treaty, concluded by John Crawfurd on November 23, 1826, between the East India Company and the King of Ava, ran as follows:

“ . . . when merchants with an English stamped pass from the country of the English Prince, and merchants from the kingdom of Burmah, pass from one country to the other, selling and buying merchandize, the sentinels of the passes and entrances, the established gate-keepers of the country, shall make enquiry as usual, but without demanding any money; and all merchants coming truly for purpose of trade with merchandize, shall be suffered to pass without hindrance or molestation. The Governments of both countries also shall permit ships with cargoes to enter ports and carry on trade, giving them the utmost protection and security; and in regard to duties, there shall none be taken beside the customary duties at the landing places of trade.”

No serious complaint about the violation of these articles by the officers of the Burmese King seems to have been submitted to the Government of India by any British subject during the period 1840-1850. In February, 1851, the Commissioner of Tenasserim brought to the notice of the Government of India a complaint submitted to him by H. Potter, of the ship "Shilomith." The Government of India having at that time 'declined to interfere' in the matter, Potter wrote a letter to the Governor-General on November 13, 1851, giving a detailed account of the circumstances connected with his residence in Rangoon during a period of twenty months, from December 1849, to August 1851. He proceeded to Rangoon in September, 1849, for the purpose of ascertaining if he could build a ship there, and on what terms. The Governor of Rangoon and the Collector of Customs assured him that every facility and assistance in their power would be afforded to him and to his property. "Upon this promise and assurance" Potter returned to Calcutta and went back to Rangoon with a portion of his building materials in January, 1850. For three months he was allowed to progress in his work without any molestation. Then the Governor was recalled, and the Collector of Customs was promoted to the Governorship. When Potter waited upon the new Governor, the latter voluntarily pledged himself to observe the treaty of Yandabo as his guide, and requested him to bring to his notice any deviation from the same on the part of the Government officers. Within a short time, however, the Governor began to interrupt Potter's operations "by all manner

of petty annoyances, and under various false pretences with the avowed intention of extorting money" from him. Potter was 'obliged to submit to this extortion' in order to prevent interruption to the building of his ship. The Governor then "levied heavy duties" upon Potter's stores, although the King of Burma had exempted him from the payment of all duties. Potter's remonstrances were returned with "vile abuse, coupled with threats of castigation and imprisonment". Finally, he was compelled to pay the sum of 16,000 Company's rupees before he was allowed to launch his ship. Potter claimed that he had suffered a total loss of Rs. 26,140-12-0. Unfortunately for him, even this letter failed to shake the 'determination' of the Government of India not to interfere on his behalf.

Meanwhile other complaints were submitted to the Commissioner of Tenasserim and the Government of India by British merchants. On June 27; 1851, Robert Sheppard, master and owner of the barque "Monarch", "well known to be a most quiet, inoffensive, and well-behaved man, correct and honourable in his dealings with all, and not likely to have committed any impropriety," submitted to the Commissioner the following statement: On June 3, 1851, the "Monarch" arrived near the Rangoon coast, and he gave charge to a pilot sent by the charterer of the ship. The pilot got into shoal water, and did not know which way to extricate the ship. When Sheppard and the crew were trying to save it, "the pilot, through fear or shame, jumped overboard." Sheppard ordered the boat to be lowered, but "the man must have been half-a-mile astern, as the flood-tide had made

strong." The boat itself being endangered, Sheppard ordered the men out of it, "or she would have swamped along-side." On his arrival at Rangoon Sheppard reported the incident to the charterer's brother. Then he was asked to wait on the Governor, and examined by a writer of the police, who also examined the second mate, boy, William Anthony, and ten *lascars*. "They were separately examined," observed Sheppard, "and all stated that your petitioner had not thrown the man overboard; the report was then taken in to the Governor, who ordered we should be kept in confinement; the only person the Governor examined was the boy William Anthony (who speaks the language), whom he ill-used by making his hands and feet fast; one of his people struck him on the thigh with an iron bolt, to make him say that your petitioner had thrown the man overboard; he told the Governor he had spoken the truth." The boy was "put into the blocks, where he remained all night and part of the next day." Sheppard was kept in confinement till 8 p.m., when he was liberated because Captain Crisp became his security. The second mate and the crew were kept in confinement. The next day Sheppard had to go to the police writer again and succeeded in securing the release of the crew "after paying 40 Rs. for jail-fees." Afterwards Captain Crisp and some native merchants persuaded the Governor to dismiss the case, Sheppard's agent paying Rs. 325. Sheppard concluded, "The accident occurred outside of the Elephant Point. Had your petitioner been guilty of the crime alleged, he would be amenable to the laws of his country and not to the Burmese,

particularly as the pilot was a British subject, a native of Chittagong, and lately resident in Moulmein."

This report was sent to the Government of India by Lieutenant-Colonel Bogle, Commissioner of Tenasserim, on July 15, 1851. On August 8 next he sent some other "communications detailing all the particulars of the treatment experienced, not only on Mr. Sheppard's arrival at Rangoon, but just before his departure therefrom". These 'communications' included (1) a declaration of Sheppard, dated July 29, 1851; (2) a declaration of Edward Antram, second mate of the "Monarch"; (3) a letter from Messrs Creaton & Co., of Moulmein, who seem to have acted as Sheppard's agents. In his declaration Sheppard narrated again the circumstances reported in his letter to the Commissioner, dated June 27, 1851, and gave an account of the proceedings of the Governor after the dismissal of the case. It appears that the Governor refused a pass for Sheppard's ship "owing to a charge brought by a man, named Dewan Ali . . . calling himself a brother of the pilot; bringing forward a claim for a sum of 500 rupees, which he stated his brother had taken with him." The Governor summoned Sheppard, his second mate, and the crew, to answer the charge, and appointed eight native merchants to arbitrate the case. The arbitrators fully acquitted Sheppard, but the Governor later on compelled them by threats to give a contrary verdict. Sheppard was ordered to pay Rs. 500, "which was done, there being no help for it."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rs. 200 for the Governor himself, Rs. 150 blood-money for the missing man, and Rs. 150 for court expenses.

The order for the pass was then given, and after Sheppard left the court, again counter-manded. The next day another Burmese officer compelled Sheppard to pay Rs 50. Then the ship was allowed to proceed on her voyage. Thus Sheppard was "defrauded of the sum of 997 rupees", his ship was "forcibly prevented from performing her voyage, to the loss and injury of the freighters", and he himself and his crew were "imprisoned and ill-used by the Governor of Rangoon and his people".

The third complaint came from Harold Lewis, master of the barque "Champion". In his letter to Colonel Bogle, dated September 16, 1851, Lewis stated as follows: He arrived at Rangoon from Mauritius on August 11. "A few days after, a complaint, of a trivial nature, was brought against me, before the Governor, by two Bengal coolies, who had secreted themselves on board my vessel, at Mauritius, without my knowledge." After five days' attendance on the Governor, Lewis was persuaded by the merchants to give him Rs. 100 to save himself from further annoyance. Within a few days of this incident, Lewis continued, "seven of my crew deserted, and endeavoured, by the Governor's assistance, to oblige me to give to them their discharge, and all their wages". Lewis was "obliged to make the Governor a present of 50 repees, to come to a decision"; the Governor then compelled him to pay to the crew half their demand. The complaint continues: "He has now got up a case of

murder against me<sup>1</sup>, one of my crew having died the day I anchored off the mouth of the river; three of the deserters, and the first two coolies, being evidence against me". The Governor refused to examine the officers and the crew of the ship, "but threatens, unless I give him 200 rupees, to detain my vessel, and write to Ava for instruction". He also threatened Lewis "with imprisonment and the blocks", and subjected him to "every insult and indignity".

This letter was forwarded by Colonel Bogle to the Government of India on September 22, 1851. On October 4 next he transmitted to that Government another statement from Lewis, in which he observed as follows: "After producing the irons in open court and a man with a rattan to flog me, and threatened to send me in irons to Ava, or behead me here at Rangoon, in fact, having done all in his power to intimidate me into admitting his right to try the case", the Governor at last 'reluctantly' examined the crew, by whose testimony "it was fully proved I never struck nor allowed to be struck any man on board the vessel". The Governor then acquitted Lewis; but two days later he re-tried him and condemned him to pay Rs. 280. The next day the *serang* of the ship was re-tried.

The fourth complaint came from the European residents

<sup>1</sup> In his letter to the Governor of Rangoon, dated September 15, 1851, Lewis said: "I am an Englishman, commanding a British vessel; and on board of that vessel, one of the crew, a British subject, dies at sea. I am reported to have killed him. I can, therefore, only be tried by a British court of law. .... I have broken none of the laws of Burmah; and I have conformed to all the regulations of the port."

of Rangoon. They addressed a memorial to the Governor-General-in-Council, which Bogle sent to the Government of India on October 21, 1851. The memorialists stated that they had "for a long time, suffered from the tyranny and gross injustice of the Burmese authorities"; that "contrary to the Treaty of Yandabo, and good faith, a much larger sum is, on all occasions, exacted from vessels, in shape of harbour-dues, &c.;" and that they were entitled to the protection of the Government of India. They referred to the cases of Sheppard and Lewis and gave some additional instances of the Burmese Governor's tyranny. About thirty "Mogul merchants" of Rangoon were compelled to pay the Governor the sum of Rs. 1500 and to sell goods to retailers on credit. An Englishman, the master of a vessel, was seized by the Burmese officials on the public wharf, and "his pockets rifled of some 35 rupees". Two other officers were seized by the same officials, "dragged to a distant part of the city, stript of their clothes, money, and watches, and their arms bound with cords for several hours. No redress was sought, as from long experience foreigners have found that application for redress has resulted only in heavy court expenses."

We have discussed the grievances of the British merchants in detail, because the allegations made by them ultimately resulted in war. No serious attempt seems to have been made by the British authorities to determine the accuracy of these allegations,<sup>1</sup> although the Governor-General was fully

<sup>1</sup> In forwarding Sheppard's second statement to the Government of India, Colonel Bogle observed: "On the merits of the case I know

conscious of the necessity of investigation.<sup>1</sup> But the facts narrated by the merchants are accompanied by so many details that they seem to bear the mark of truth. Moreover, it must be noted that the four complaints described above relate to a period of 18 months (March, 1850—September, 1851), and came from individuals who hardly knew each other. It is hardly possible to suspect that they had entered into a conspiracy against the Governor of Rangoon. If Sheppard and Lewis knew anything about the unsympathetic attitude adopted by the Government of India to Potter's complaint, they could hardly have ventured to manufacture grievances. Potter's testimony about the character of the Governor of Rangoon who was recalled in 1850, clearly shows that British merchants were not inclined to find fault with Burmese officials simply because they were Burmese.

As a matter of fact, the trouble seems to have originated after the appointment of the new Governor of Rangoon early in 1850.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Hall observes, "In 1851 the Burmese Governor of Rangoon, aware of Pagan Min's hatred of Westerners, nothing more than is stated in Mr. Sheppard's protest; but I am disposed to credit what he states, because he bears such a high character at this place . . . ." Dr. D. G. E. Hall admits, "Possibly . . . insufficient examination was made of the claims for compensation against the Burmese authorities so readily put forward by British merchants." (*The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*, Introduction, p. xx).

<sup>1</sup> "Although there seems no reason to doubt the accuracy of the depositions, or the veracity of the deponents, it would be right, his Lordship (i.e., Lord Dalhousie) thinks, that Commodore Lambert should, in the first instance, be satisfied on this head." The Commodore wrote to the Governor of Rangoon on January 6, 1852, that he had investigated the cases of Sheppard and Lewis and come to the conclusion that their claims were just.

<sup>2</sup> Potter's statement makes it clear.

deemed it an excellent opportunity to subject certain British traders to outrage in order to extort money from them."<sup>1</sup> From the memorial submitted by the European residents of Rangoon to the Governor-General we learn that this Governor "has publicly stated to his dependents, that he has no money to pay them for their services, and has granted to them his permission to rob the inhabitants, and to get money as they best can." This statement seems to indicate that the Governor was suffering from financial difficulties, and, being unable to pay his officials, authorised them "to rob the inhabitants, and to get money as they best can." The use of the word 'inhabitants' by the memorialists<sup>2</sup> seems to indicate that the Governor did not harbour any special grudge against the English merchants and that his licence was aimed at natives and foreigners alike. Unfortunately he did not know, or forgot, that British merchants would not submit to extortion and imprisonment as easily as the Burmese subjects. If the facts narrated by the British merchants were substantially true, there can be no doubt that the Governor violated the treaty of Yandabo and claimed jurisdiction in cases<sup>3</sup> which International Law<sup>4</sup> did not authorise him to deal with. The

<sup>1</sup> *The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*, Introduction, p. xvii.

<sup>2</sup> The case of the "Mogul merchants" and the list of grievances submitted to Commodore Lambert by the merchants of Rangoon, show that the victims of the Governor's tyranny included many Indians.

<sup>3</sup> Charge of murder brought against Sheppard and Lewis. Both of them objected to the exercise of Burmese jurisdiction.

<sup>4</sup> Sir Henry Elliot, Secretary to the Government of India, described the court of Ava as a "barbarous court." It was, therefore, outside the pale of International Law, which is applicable only to States civilised after the western model.

difficulties in which he put, the British merchants were certainly far more serious than those "trifling irregularities or annoyances" which the British Government were inclined to "pass over . . . as insignificant" in their relations with "a barbarous court, such as that of Ava."

When Sheppard's complaint, transmitted by Colonel Bogle, reached Calcutta, Lord Dalhousie was touring, and Sir Henry Elliot, Secretary to the Government of India, was accompanying him. Halliday, Secretary to the Government of India, invited the Governor-General's attention to the cases of Sheppard and Lewis, and observed: "It appears to the President in Council that it is incumbent on the British Government to take notice of these obvious infractions of the Treaty by the Burmese authorities, and to protect, from oppression and injury, British subjects engaged in the lawful prosecution of trade<sup>1</sup> in a Burmese port". Sir Henry Elliot wrote to Halliday from Pinjore on October 31, 1851, that, after carefully examining the complaints of Sheppard and Lewis as well as the treaty of Yandabo and the treaty of commerce with Ava, the Governor-General had come to a conclusion which "entirely corresponds" with the opinion of the President in Council. The cases reported to the Governor-General were serious, and he thought that in such cases "British subjects and traders have, undoubtedly, a just right

<sup>1</sup> In their memorial to the Governor-General the European residents of Rangoon stated that they were "here under the provisions of the Treaty of Yandabo" and that "they are striving, under every difficulty, to carry on a trade beneficial to Great Britain and the whole of British India."

to expect that they shall be protected by their own Government from injustice, oppression, and extortion." Under the circumstances, the Government of India should "demand reparation from the Government of Ava, if its officer<sup>1</sup> should refuse to make a proper submission for the injury he has done, and the insult he has offered." It was, however, difficult to deal in such cases with the Burmese Court, because at that time there was no accredited Agent of the British Government at that Court. "Experience of the course pursued by the Burmese authorities towards former envoys, seems, at the same time, to dissuade the Government of India from having recourse to the employment of another Mission, if the object of the Government can be accomplished in any other way." The Governor-General suggested that Commodore Lambert, who was present in Calcutta, should be requested "to proceed to Rangoon with the ships under his command,<sup>2</sup> and any other available vessels of war (such as the "Tenasserim" and "Enterprise" steamers, and the "Proserpine", which . . . is still at Moulmein), in order to endeavour to obtain from the Governor of Rangoon the reparation which is due to the British Government." The Commodore should at first satisfy himself about the accuracy of the merchants' allegations, and then address a note to the Governor of Rangoon demanding pecuniary compensation in favour of the injured parties. Lord Dalhousie expected that "the presence of British men-of-war in front of Rangoon, the obvious justice

<sup>1</sup> Governor of Rangoon.

<sup>2</sup> Her Majesty's ships "Fox" and "Serpent."

of the demand, and the indefensible character of the Governor's proceedings, may lead him at once to acquiesce in the Commodore's demand." If the Governor refused to comply with this demand, the President in Council should address a letter to the King of Burma, thereby affording the King "an opportunity of disavowing his (i.e., the Governor's) acts, and of making the reparation which he had refused to concede." If the King upheld the Governor's conduct, the Government of India would 'doubtless' be 'entitled' to "proceed to exact reparation by force of arms, or to inflict such punishment on the Burmese State as circumstances might seem to require". Finally, Lord Dalhousie wished it to be "distinctly understood, that no act of hostility is to be committed at present, though the reply of the Governor should be unfavourable, nor until definite instructions regarding such hostilities shall be given by the Government of India."

The question of "pecuniary compensation" was not easily settled. Lord Dalhousie expected that the amount to be demanded from the Governor of Rangoon should be fixed by the President in Council, "on such better information as may . . . be . . . before him". The President, however, having "no means of obtaining the requisite information to enable him to decide on this point," authorised Commodore Lambert to use his 'discretion' in deciding what pecuniary compensation should be demanded on account of Sheppard (whose agents had put forward a distinct claim for Rs. 5,000) and Lewis (who claimed Rs. 9,208). Commodore Lambert declined 'to give an opinion on this subject, as he did not

'consider' himself "a judge to decide matters relating to mercantile transactions." On November 11, 1851, Messrs Mackey & Co. submitted another claim for Rs. 8,066-15-9. in respect of certain transactions during the period December, 1845—October, 1851. On November 13, 1851, Potter submitted a claim for Rs. 26,140-12-0 only. In his letter to Commodore Lambert, dated November 14, 1851, Halliday conveyed the President's decisions about these claims. In Sheppard's case it was decided, after detailed calculations, to demand about 3,400 or 3,500 rupees; in Lewis's case, about 5,500 or 5,600 rupees. The claim of Messrs. Mackey & Co. was "not one which can be properly enforced by the Government of India," which also refused to interfere on behalf of Potter. Ultimately the Government of India decided to demand Rs. 9,948 on behalf of Sheppard and Lewis.

In accordance with Lord Dalhousie's instructions the President in Council directed Commodore Lambert to proceed to Rangoon. The Company's steamers "Tenasserim" and "Proserpine," "properly armed and equipped, and manned by European crews", were placed under his command. Captain Latter was instructed to accompany him as interpreter. A letter was placed in his hands, with instructions to transmit it to the King if the demands upon the Governor of Rangoon were not complied with. Information was sent to the Commissioner of Tenasserim, in order that, without making any open or hostile demonstration, he might take what precautionary measures he might deem necessary to guard

against any sudden attack or surprise on the part of the Burmese.

Commodore Lambert started from Calcutta on November 18, 1851, and arrived there a few days later. On the day before he arrived off Rangoon, "and at a spot some considerable distance from the town, a boat came off to the frigate, containing a Mr. Crisp,<sup>1</sup> an English resident at Rangoon, with a message from the Governor, asking for what purpose the expedition had made its appearance in the river? Commodore Lambert replied, that he came for the purpose of making a communication to the Governor of Rangoon, on certain matters which he would not then allude to." Through Crisp's good services the Governor appointed a day to receive the communications, and fixed the custom-house, which was close to the wharf, as the place of meeting, his own house being some two and a half miles inland. No British subject came off to the frigate, and "information was conveyed to the Commodore, that the Governor had threatened to cut off the heads and break the legs of all the foreigners, British or others, who went down to the wharf to welcome the frigate." Captain Latter, the interpreter, went down to the shore "entirely alone" and visited some English residents, who said that no boats would go off from the shore, they having been prohibited, and also mentioned the threat given out publicly by the Governor. The Governor also inflicted certain petty annoyances on the Commodore. Then some British subjects came to see the Commodore and, at his request, put their

<sup>1</sup> He seems to be the same person who became security for Mr. Sheppard.

complaints in writing (November 28, 1851). Their list of grievances included 38 cases of oppression and injustice attributed to the Governor of Rangoon.<sup>1</sup>

These cases proved, in the Commodore's opinion, "that the Governor of Rangoon was unfit to be entrusted with the lives and property of British subjects", and, in anticipation of the Governor-General's sanction, he deviated "from his first intentions of demanding an apology from the Governor, and pecuniary compensation to Messrs Lewis and Sheppard." He thought "that there was much more chance of any discussion coming to a happy and peaceful termination, and no collision taking place, if held with a new Governor, than with the present incumbent. Thus he made his removal a preliminary to entering into any discussion". On November 27, 1851, Commodore Lambert wrote to the Governor that, in view of the many fresh instances of his misconduct towards British subjects, he "deemed it his duty to withhold his original demand, until he had again communicated their complaints" to the Governor-General.

Meanwhile the Governor had changed the place of meeting from the custom-house to his own house, and he

<sup>1</sup> Some of these cases appeared to the Commodore "well founded and deserving of notice." Halliday wrote to him on December 27, 1851 : "The statements contained in the memoria<sup>s</sup> presented by the British subjects at Rangoon must be received with caution ; nor having been made the subject of complaint at the time, these additional cases cannot now be made the groundwork of an increased demand for compensation. But it may reasonably be concluded from them, that the cases of Captain Lewis and Captain Sheppard are not isolated instances of oppression on the part of the Governor, but that there has long been a systematic course of oppression pursued by him, and habitual violation of rights and treaties."

never sent any notice of this change. Captain Latter, accompanied by some other officers, went to the Governor's house on November 27 to deliver the above letter. They were received by the Governor, who "made his appearance in a somewhat informal dress", although all the subordinate officers were in their court dress, and the European officers were in full uniform. The letter being delivered, the European officers returned to the frigate, saying that they were not authorised to hold "any other communication". Next day the Governor sent his reply through a deputation to the Commodore; he simply denied "ever doing any injury to British subjects". The Commodore entrusted to this deputation two important letters—one from the Government of India to the King, and another from himself to the Prime Minister of Ava. The Commodore also wrote a letter to the Governor, holding him "responsible for an answer (to the above letters) being delivered in these waters, within five weeks from this day".

The circumstances narrated above were brought to the notice of the Government of India by Captain Latter's report to Halliday on December 6, 1851. Halliday at once sent a copy of this report to the Governor-General, and on December 27 wrote a letter to Commodore Lambert furnishing him with instructions for his guidance in every contingency that could be foreseen. The Government of India held the view that the Commodore had "exercised a sound discretion in cutting short all discussion with the local Governor, and in transmitting at once to the King of Ava the letter addressed

to His Majesty by the Government of India. ~~The~~ removal of the Governor could not be expected to be a 'sufficient guarantee' for British subjects; the Government of India contemplated that "a British Agent must be placed at Rangoon, in pursuance of the Treaty, with the guard of fifty men allowed by the VIIth. Article." A war-steamer should be stationed, "well armed, in the river of Rangoon, which will probably insure his being treated with respect, and will, at all events, provide for the personal safety of himself and British subjects in the town, in the event of the Governor proceeding to extremities." Before these steps could be taken, the immediate rights of British subjects must be safeguarded. The Government of India were determined not to "have recourse to the terrible extremity of war, except in the last resort, and after every other method has been tried without success.". If the King sent an unfavourable reply, Commodore Lambert was asked to establish blockade of the two rivers at Rangoon and Moulmein, 'by which the great mass of the traffic of the Burmese Empire was understood to pass.' This appeared to be the only course "which would not, on the one hand, involve a dangerous submission to injury, or, on the other hand, precipitate us prematurely into a war which moderate counsels may still enable us with honor to avert." The bombardment of Rangoon, though easy, was not to be attempted; it would be "unjustifiable and cruel in the extreme, since the punishment would fall chiefly on the harmless population, who already suffer from the oppression of their rulers, even more than our own subjects." "To occupy

Rangoon or Martaban with an armed force would be easy also, but it would probably render inevitable the war which we desire in the first instance by less stringent measures to avert."

This letter makes it clear that, as late as December 27, 1851, the Government of India did not want or apprehend war. If further proof is needed, it will be found in the fact that Lord Dalhousie was yet on tour, and did not consider it necessary to return to Calcutta.<sup>1</sup> Obviously, no serious emergency was expected to arise within a short time. But the direction of affairs had really devolved upon Commodore Lambert, who does not appear to have been influenced very much by "moderate counsels" commended by the Government of India.<sup>2</sup> At the Commodore's request Her Majesty's sloop "Serpent", stationed off Rangoon, was supplied with four 12-pounder brass guns, with a proportion of shell, spherical, and common case-shot for them, to be used "in the event of hostilities taking place with the Burmese Nation."

<sup>1</sup> As early as November 27, Sir Henry Elliot wrote to Halliday as follows : "If affairs should take an unfavourable turn, and more extended measures appear to be necessary, his Lordship will quit the camp, and proceed by *dak* to Calcutta, in order to confer with his Honor in Council on the course to be adopted by the Government of India."

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Hall observes, "... in an era when Palmerston could rally the country round him in defence of a far more high-handed act by his 'Civis Romanus' speech, it would have required a man of superhuman self-control to have swallowed the insults deliberately heaped upon the British mission by the new Governor of Rangoon . . ." (*The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*, Introduction, pp. xviii-xix). It appears from one of Lord Dalhousie's letters that after seizing the Burmese King's ship Lambert "had written home, and he was sure Palmerston would have approved." (Baird, *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, p. 260).

On January 1, 1852, an officer from Amarapura delivered to Commodore Lambert the King's reply to the letter of the Government of India, a letter addressed by the Burmese Ministers to the President of the Council of India, and the Burmese Ministers' reply to the Commodore's letter. The King's reply took exception to the statement "that the British Government shall enforce the right it possesses," and expressed the hope "that in the event of any future communication between the two great countries, the usual form and style, according to custom and agreement, should be carefully attended to." The letter addressed by the Burmese Ministers to the President of the Council stated that the Governor of Rangoon had been recalled.<sup>1</sup> "A suitable Governor shall be appointed to administer the affairs of Rangoon ; and with regard to the merchants who have been unjustifiably insulted and ill-treated, proper and strict inquiries shall be instituted, and in accordance to custom it shall be decided". The Burmese Ministers' reply to the Commodore's letter gave the same information. On January 2 Commodore Lambert wrote to Halliday, expressing "great hopes" that "amicable arrangements will be made with the Burmese Government", and supporting the proposal for establishing a Resident at Rangoon.

On January 3 "a fleet of boats, with above 3,000 men, made its appearance, coming down the river"; and on the next day the newly appointed Governor arrived at Rangoon. No information was given by the Burmese authorities, of the new

<sup>1</sup> This Governor "was allowed to take his departure in a manner unlike a disgraced Burmese official."—Captain Latter's *Narrative*.

Governor's arrival. "This alone", says Captain Latter, "was a discourteous, or even contemptuous, act". The first official act of the new Governor was to issue orders to prevent any communication of British subjects on shore with any vessels in the river. Then he ordered Birell, an English merchant of Rangoon, to take down a flag-staff he had erected to hoist a signal of distress, and to remove a gun he had placed to defend himself. Birell refused to act without Commodore Lambert's orders. The Commodore directed Birell to obey the Governor's orders on the subject. Although Birell was obviously acting in self-defence, it is difficult to justify his refusal to obey the orders of the Government of the country in which he was living.

On January 5 Commodore Lambert sent Edwards, the assistant interpreter, to the Governor of Dalla<sup>1</sup> to ascertain whether the new Governor had arrived, because he had no official information on the subject. The Governor of Dalla said that "the new Governor had arrived, and that he appeared to think the fact of the appearance of his flotilla of boats sufficient notice of his arrival." Edwards then went to the Governor's house at Rangoon, and ascertained the truth of this statement. Next day he went to the Governor's house again, to give notice that a deputation from Commodore Lambert was coming to him. As he appeared at the foot of the outer steps, one of the Governor's suite drew his dagger on him. On being called into the Governor's presence he reported the matter to him. The offender was punished, in

<sup>1</sup> A town opposite Rangoon, on the other side of the river.

the presence of Edwards, "by having him taken by the hair of the head, swung round three times, his face dashed to the ground, himself dragged out by the hair, and pitched down stairs."

On January 6 Commander Fishbourne, of Her Majesty's steam-sloop "Hermes", accompanied by Captain Latter, Edwards and some naval officers, went to deliver Commodore Lambert's letter to the new Governor. This letter demanded the sum of Rs. 9,948 as compensation for Sheppard and Lewis, and proposed that a British Resident should be established at Rangoon. Information had been already sent to the Governor through Edwards; moreover, the English officers met on their way with Moung Pogan, the recognised Burmese and English interpreter of the Governor, and requested him to convey to the Governor the news that the deputation was coming. Thus removing "the only excuse the Governor could have had for not receiving us, namely, his not being aware of our approach," the officers arrived near the Governor's house at noon. There two Burmese officers tried to stop them, saying that they must make their communication with the Under-Governor. The English officers took no notice of this, and appeared at the doorway of the Governor's house. They found Moung Pogan and some other subordinate attendants, who told them that the Governor was asleep. On being requested to awake the Governor Moung Pogan went in, and after a short time came out and beckoning to Edwards, told him that the Governor wished to see him. Captain Latter said that "this was out" of the

question" and pointed out that they were compelled to wait "at the foot of the outer stairs and in the sun." The Burmese attendants pointed to an open shed where the Englishmen might get shade. Captain Latter refused to go to that shed, which was "a shelter thrown up for the reception of persons waiting to have their cases tried". Then two Burmese officers went up the steps; they were requested to inform the Governor about the arrival of the deputation, but in vain. Thus "exhausting every polite means of securing access to the Governor, Captain Fishbourne was obliged to retrace his steps, but he did so leisurely, in the vain hope that he might be asked to return."

When the officers returned to the ships, Commodore Lambert suspended all further communications with the Governor, gave asylum in his ships to the British subjects resident in Rangoon, and blockaded "the rivers of Rangoon, the Bassein, and Salween above Moulmein" in accordance with Halliday's instructions. Neutral vessels, lying in either of the blockaded rivers, were permitted to retire within 20 days from the commencement of the blockade. He also took possession of a ship belonging to the King of Burma, by way of reprisal. His next step was to forward a letter through the Burmese Governor of Dalla to the King's Ministers, protesting against the Governor's conduct and asking for explanation.

These strong measures put the Governor in a conciliatory mood. His "tactics changed, yet not in a manly straightforward manner, but little by little". He sent three Burmese

officers<sup>1</sup> to the Commodore to say that the Governor was really asleep at the time. Then he sent the Governor of Dalla to see what he could do in the matter. Commodore Lambert agreed to open communications with the Governor of Rangoon "if that officer would come himself on board his frigate, and express his regret for the insult that he had offered to the British flag, in the persons of the deputation sent to him". Then the Under-Governor of Rangoon made his appearance. He was the bearer of a letter from the Governor, in which the latter stated that the English officers had gone to his house "in a state of intoxication, and, contrary to custom, entered the compound on horseback". These incidents happened on January 7. On January 8 the Governor of Dalla came to request the Commodore to give up the King's ship, but the latter did not agree to do so. On January 11 the Governor of Rangoon proposed through some Indian merchants of Rangoon to abide by the treaty of Yandabo, to agree to a Resident being appointed, to pay the sum of upwards of Rs. 9,000, and to have a Residency House erected. Commodore Lambert gave no reply to the proposals, but reported them to the Government of India.

Commodore Lambert took a very extreme step when he seized the Burmese King's ship. Lord Dalhousie regretted it and wrote to Broughton on January 23, "these Commodores are too combustible for negotiations". On the same day

<sup>1</sup> Captain Latter says, "I cannot call them a deputation, the highest among them being merely a *Tseetkay*, a rank which in Moulmein never sits in the presence of an European superior."

the Governor-General wrote to his friend Sir George Couper that the Commodore had acted "in disobedience of his orders". Later on he wrote again : "There is no doubt that Lambert was the *immediate* cause of the war by seizing the King's ship, in direct disobedience of his orders from me. I accepted the responsibility of his act, but disapproved and censured it".<sup>1</sup> A critical modern writer describes the Commodore's action as "undoubtedly high-handed", although he defends it on the ground that "it would have required a man of superhuman self-control to have swallowed the insults deliberately heaped upon the British mission by the new Governor of Rangoon".

In his letter to Commodore Lambert the Governor of Rangoon said that he did not re-seize the King's ship "in consequence of there being a treaty of peace between the two nations". He sent a message to the effect that he would fire on the English if they tried to take the ship out of the river. Commodore Lambert informed him "that if a shot was fired by the Burmese, at either of Her Britannic Majesty's ships, I would return it". On January 9 a number of large Burmese war-boats went down the river, the crews of which, on passing the English squadron, "behaved in a very menacing

<sup>1</sup> In this letter Lord Dalhousie says that the despatches expressing his disapproval of this act "are suppressed in the Blue-Book." There is no indication of the Governor-General's attitude of regret in the documents included in the *Parliamentary Papers*. Laurie (*The Second Burmese War*, p. 26) justifies the Commodore's action on the alleged ground that "the whole affair was left to the Commodore's discretion." But Sir Henry Elliot's letter to Halliday, dated October 31, 1851, makes it clear that the Commodore was not authorised to commit any act of hostility without definite instructions from the Government of India.

manner". On January 10 the "Fox" was being towed up the river "for the purpose of better carrying on the blockade"; suddenly the Burmese stockade opened a sharp cannonade on it, "which was instantly returned with shot and shell, and the Burmese battery was in a short time silenced". As at least 3,000 men were opposed against the English, the Commodore's fire "must have done great execution".<sup>1</sup> Then some Burmese war-boats were destroyed and their guns spiked, or thrown into the river. A Burmese stockade on the opposite side of the river opened fire on the "Hermes", but "her heavy guns and a few rockets soon silenced this battery, and compelled the Burmese to retire". The British squadron sustained no loss; only the "Fox" suffered a "very trifling damage".

On January 17 Commodore Lambert arrived in Calcutta to communicate in person with the President in Council. He returned to Rangoon on January 21 "to await there the instructions; his intention is not to act on any overtures for apology or reconciliation, should such be made to him, but to refer any communication of the kind that he may receive, for the orders of the Government of India".

Meanwhile preparation for military operations proceeded briskly. A wing of Her Majesty's 18th Regiment (Royal Irish), and a company of European Artillery, with necessary stores, were despatched to Moulmein. A properly equipped gun-boat was placed at the disposal of Commodore Lambert

<sup>1</sup> Laurie says, "Altogether, about three hundred of the enemy were killed, and about the same number wounded, in this first encounter with the Burmese."

for employment in blockade. The Superintendent of Marine was asked to report on the means of conveying to Burma, at a short notice, one or two Indian regiments. Towards the end of January a regiment of Indian Infantry and some artillery were sent to the Commissioner of Arakan as a precautionary measure. The Commissioner reported that the arrival of a large reinforcement of European troops produced a sensible alteration in the tone of the Burmese.

All these transactions were regularly reported to Lord Dalhousie, who wrote to the Secret Committee on January 25 from his camp at Benares : "You, I trust, will be of opinion that throughout these transactions the Government of India have shown no undue sensitiveness; that they have properly protected the rights of British subjects; and have properly insisted on that respect, which is necessary to insure protection for the rights and security for the persons of British traders in Ava; while, at the same time, they have evinced a sincere desire to avoid having recourse to war, if the security and respect which are guaranteed by treaty to our traders and subjects can be obtained by any less violent means". To a private friend he wrote on January 23, "So all that fat is in the fire".

On January 26 Halliday wrote to Commodore Lambert, expressing the Governor-General's approval of the Commodore's action in refusing to hold any further communication with the Burmese authorities at Rangoon, asking him to forward the President's reply to the letter addressed to the Government of India by the Governor of Rangoon, and

instructing him to engage in no other hostile operations except the blockade. In that reply the Government of India demanded that the Governor should express, in writing, his deep regret for the insult suffered by Commander Fishbourne and his associates on January 6, that he should pay the compensation (i.e., Rs. 9,948) demanded before, and that he should receive with due honour an agent of the Government of India who was to be appointed in accordance with Article 7 of the treaty of Yandabo. If these demands were satisfied, the Government of India agreed to depute an officer of rank to proceed to Rangoon, in order to adjust "the final settlement of the questions, to release the King's ship, and to remove the blockade." The conclusion of the letter was as follows : "If these demands shall be refused, the British Government will thereafter exact for itself the reparation which is due for the wrong it has suffered." To these demands the Governor replied on February 2. He complained that Commodore Lambert's conduct was not in conformity with the custom of great nations. With regard to the incident of January 6 he stated that "the English officers have been stating their own version of the case, and consequently, whilst shielding themselves, they have thrown all the blame on the other side". However, the Governor, was prepared to make "a satisfactory and amicable arrangement" about the payment of compensation and the release of the King's ship when the English agent arrived.

On January 31, as the "Fox" was being towed up the river in order to deliver the letter to the Governor, a canno-

nade was directed against her from a stockade on the river bank. Commodore Lambert returned the cannonade, and "in three minutes the Burmese battery was silenced". The Commodore wrote to the Governor about the incident, and added that "if any further aggression is made on Her Britannic Majesty's ships, I shall not only silence the fire, but destroy the stockade from which it proceeds". The Governor replied, "In future, if you desire to proceed up, or down the river, you should obtain permission from the officers in charge of the stockades". On February 2, Burmese stockades opened fire on the "*Tenhaserim*". A letter from one of the Burmese *Chokeys* at the mouth of the Bassein River, forwarded to Commander Luard, of H. M. brig "*Serpent*", stated, "You enter and quit the river just as you please to do so. This is not in accordance to custom". A collision between the English river police and the Burmese inhabitants of Pagat (a village situated on the righ bank of the Salween, within the territories of the King of Burma) was prevented by the conciliatory attitude of the Governor of Martaban and the timely intervention of the Commissioner of Tenasserim.

On January 29 Lord Dalhousie arrived in Calcutta. On February 12 he laid down in a long Minute his conclusion that the Government of India had "no alternative but to exact reparation by force of arms". He thought that the Governor's reply, "far from making the required concessions, has evaded them all". If the Government of India sent an envoy, "it will suffer itself to be decoyed into a feeble and false position". He added : "It will, in so doing, openly abandon every

demand for reparation it has so peremptorily, and justly advanced. It will tamely submit itself to national insult. It will give reasonable ground, for all who desire it, to assert that the offensive accusation of its officers, by the Governor of Rangoon, must needs be true, since his treatment of those officers, and his subsequent accusation of them, are alike unresented; and not only so, but they are themselves superseded by another negotiator. In one word, the position of the two Governments will be suddenly and wholly reversed . . . . in the eyes of the Burmese Nation, and of every Eastern people that is looking on. The British Government . . . . will, unquestionably, be regarded as having submitted to humiliation and avowed defeat. "I have sincerely desired, and have earnestly laboured for, the preservation of peace; but I cannot, consistently with the duty which I owe to the state, consent to purchase peace at so costly a price". Some private letters of the Governor-General express his ideas more unconventionally, if not more clearly. On April 24, 1852, he wrote : ". . . . this is not a question of insult merely, but of injury. . . . . The simple question is whether, before all Asia, England will submit to Ava, desert its subjects, and be driven out of the Irrawaddy; or whether, protecting its subjects, it will enforce its treaty rights by arms, if no less alternative will do, take possession of the Irrawaddy itself. God knows I lament the alternative, but I did not create it<sup>1</sup> . . . . if we

<sup>1</sup> In the Minute itself he says, ". . . . the desire of the Government of India for an amicable adjustment . . . . was genuine; it sought no conquest, or pretext of war."

shrink from it our power in India will be shaken by our short-sighted and cowardly policy worse than ever it has been shaken by our enemies".<sup>1</sup> In another letter he observed : "We can't afford to be shown to the door anywhere in the East : there are too many doors to our residence there to admit of our submitting to that movement safely at any one of them".

In spite of these sentiments Lord Dalhousie kept open the door to a peaceful settlement. He said :

"If overtures of peace should be made before the war shall actually commence, . . . we must now require :

1. The apology previously demanded.
2. The payment of Rs. 9,000, formerly demanded for Captain Sheppard and Captain Lewis.
3. The honourable reception of the Agent at Rangoon.
4. In consideration of the expenses of the expedition, and of compensation for property, ten lacs of rupees.<sup>2</sup>

If these demands are complied with, and paid at once, the force should be at once withdrawn. If they are agreed

<sup>1</sup> In the Minute itself he says, "The British power in India cannot safely afford to exhibit even a temporary appearance of inferiority. Whilst I should be reluctant to believe that our empire in India has no stay but the sword alone, it is vain to doubt that our hold must mainly rest upon the might of the conqueror, and must be maintained by that power. The Government of India cannot. . . . hope to maintain peace and submission among the numberless princes and people. . . . if, for one day, it give countenance to a doubt of the absolute superiority of its arms, and of its continued resolution to assert it."

<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere Lord Dalhousie says, "The sum of 10 lacs was not set down arbitrarily, but was the result of calculation, so far as it could be made."

to, but the larger sum is not producible, the possession of Rangoon and Martaban, until the payment of the specified sum, should be insisted upon. If these demands shall be rejected, or if the possession of Rangoon and Martaban, until they are fulfilled, shall be refused, operations of war should commence".

Before this Minute was drawn up, a letter from the King of Ava had been despatched to the Governor-General through the Governor of Martaban and the Commissioner of Tenasserim. The Burmese officers who conveyed this letter to Mr. Bogle, the Commissioner, were "most" particularly desirous that further negotiations should not be concluded through Rangoon", and tried to use him as the channel of fresh negotiations. Colonel Bogle told them that he had no authority to enter into negotiations and that "if their Government really desired a settlement of differences, it should lose no time in forwarding proper persons with sufficient powers to Commodore Lambert, with whom alone negotiations could be carried on". The Governor-General in Council approved of the course pursued by the Commissioner.

The King's letter, after giving an unfavourable account of Commodore Lambert's activities, wondered whether the Government of India had deputed him "simply to dispose of the question relating to the merchants, or whether he has been sent to begin by an attack, which should have the effect of bringing on hostilities between the two countries". Lord Dalhousie wrote to a friend about this letter : "It may be meant as an olive branch, or it may be a hum". His

official rep'y, dated February 18, was uncompromising in its demands and severe in its language :

"1. Your Majesty, disavowing the acts of the present Governor of Rangoon, shall, by the hands of your Ministers, express regret that Captain Fishbourne and the British officers who accompanied him were exposed to insult at the hand of your servants at Rangoon, on the 6th of January last.

2. . . . Your Majesty will agree to pay, and will pay at once, ten lacs of rupees to the Government of India.

3. Your Majesty will direct that an accredited Agent, to be appointed in conformity with Article VII of the Treaty of Yandaboo, and to reside at Rangoon, shall be received by Your Majesty's servants there; and shall, at all times, be treated with the respect due to the Representative of the British Government.

4. Your Majesty will direct the removal of the present Governor of Rangoon. . . .

If, without further delay, negotiation, or correspondence, these conditions shall be consented to, and shall be fulfilled on, or before, the 1st day of April next, hostile operations shall be stayed, peace between the States shall be renewed, and the King's ship shall be restored.

But if—untaught by former experience; forgetful of the irresistible power of the British arms in India; and heedless of the many additional proofs that have been given of its might, in the successful fall of the powerful Sovereigns of Bhurtpore, of Scinde, of the Sikhs, and of many other princes, since last the Burman rulers vainly attempted to resist the

British troops in war—the King of Ava shall unwisely refuse the just and lenient conditions which are now set before him, the British Government will have no alternative but immediate war".

This was certainly too strong a letter to be addressed to an independent ruler. "When the correspondence was sent home, the President of the Board of Control referred to this communication as couched in too severe terms". In his letter dated April 6 Lord Dalhousie remarked : "It is not unnatural that an English statesman accustomed to the language of diplomacy employed in communications between highly civilised States should feel disinclination to a tone of menace. But no Indian potentate would attend to any command conveyed as a European power would word it. Least of all would the Burmese Sovereign have paid the smallest heed to any dignified remonstrance such as you advise, unless it were accompanied by a clear intimation of consequences".

The Governor-General's letter to the King was handed over to Burmese officers on March 1 by the Commissioner of Tenasserim. Lord Dalhousie seems to have expected an amicable settlement, for on February 21 he wrote to a friend : "They (i.e., the Burmese) are apparently uneasy; but the arrogance of the nation is such that, like the Sikhs, they probably will hurry their Government into war". The 'arrogance' of the Burmese Court was due to the fact that since 1826 "the King had taken European adventurers into his pay; some of them were deserters from the British army.

They had manufactured a large number of cannon, and made some progress in drilling the Burmese infantry. Accordingly the younger officials were puffed up with the idea that they could cope with the English. They thought that the English knew nothing of the improvements in their army, and would be surprised by the discipline of their forces, and the superiority of their guns"<sup>1</sup>. The King's half-brother, the Prince of Mindon, vainly tried to enforce a conciliatory policy<sup>2</sup>.

While negotiations were going on, petty incidents were straining the nerves of both the parties. Soon after his arrival at Rangoon, the new Governor "had ordered the town to be entirely destroyed; the merchants' houses had been plundered, and . . . . the inhabitants had been removed to the new town". The "Mahomedan, Mogul, Nagore, Suratee, and Armenian merchants of Rangoon" stated in a petition to the Governor-General that "all the merchants, great and small, both at Rangoon and at Ava, have been put to great trouble and vexation, and their occupation as merchants is gone." The Armenian inhabitants of Calcutta requested the Governor-General "to take into consideration the lamentable condition of their unfortunate countrymen in Burmah" and "to adopt immediate and prompt measures for the liberation of the Armenian Christians in Rangoon and

<sup>1</sup> Albert Fytche, *Burma, Past and Present*, pp. 120-21.

<sup>2</sup> On March 3, 1853, Lord Dalhousie wrote: "The King's brother appears to have got completely the upper hand, and has already sent to treat for peace."

Ava from their imprisonment, and for the restitution of the property, of which they have been . . . spoliated". On January 25 Commodore Lambert declared that the Baragu river, and other outlets of the Irrawaddy, were included in the blockade. H. M. sloop "Serpent" was fired at by the Burmese near the island of Negrais in the Bassein river ; Commander Luard, officer in charge of the sloop, destroyed some Burmese stockades, taking care not to touch a "single article of private property."

On March 3 Commodore Lambert was directed not to hold any communication with any Burmese officer. On March 26 the Commissioner of Tenasserim reported that preparations for resistance were being made by the Burmese at Martaban as well as Rangoon : "There is no doubt that at the latter place extensive works of defence have been constructed; but at the former nothing seems as yet to have been done of material consequence." After the arrival of the naval squadron and the expeditionary force from Calcutta at Rangoon, the "Proserpine" under a flag of truce was sent up to Rangoon on April 2 to inquire whether any reply to the Governor-General's ultimatum had been received from the capital. The steamer, being fired at from the Burmese stockades, returned with shell and shot, and came back to the anchorage without damage.

We have narrated in some detail the circumstances leading to the commencement of hostilities; it remains to assess Lord Dalhousie's personal responsibility for the war. Dr. Hall says that "Dalhousie never publicly defended his

policy: he left it to the judgment of posterity".<sup>1</sup> His biographer, Sir William Lee-Warner, has tried to explain the case for him.<sup>2</sup> The publication of the Governor-General's private letters<sup>3</sup> enables us to trace the origin and development of his policy. These documents clearly reveal the important fact that Lord Dalhousie, instead of wanting or welcoming war, tried his best to prevent it. The last words of his diary for the year 1852 were : "God ! He knows how fervently I desired to avert this necessity—of war". It must be recognised, however, that the policy of sending a squadron under a Commodore was a somewhat extraordinary method of demanding compensation on behalf of aggrieved British subjects.<sup>4</sup> John Lawrence wrote to Courtenay, Lord Dalhousie's Private Secretary, "Why did you send a Commodore to Burma if you wanted peace?" Lord Dalhousie himself observed to Broughton on January 23, 1852, "these Commodores are too combustible for negotiations". On July 23, 1853, he wrote : "It is easy to be wise after the fact. If I had the gift of prophecy I would not have employed Lambert to negotiate. But being only mortal,

<sup>1</sup> *The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*, Introduction, p. xx.

<sup>2</sup> *The Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, Vol. I, chap. xii.

<sup>3</sup> *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, edited by Baird, 1910. *The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*, edited by Hall, 1932.

<sup>4</sup> This was one of the chief complaints levelled against him by Cobden in his famous pamphlet, *How Wars Are Got Up in India: the Origin of the Burmese War*. Dr. Hall says, "Cobden's criticisms have a twentieth-century ring about them... but he obviously did not understand the real situation as between Great Britain and Burma, either in its wider aspect or from 'the purely diplomatic standpoint.' (*The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*, Introduction, p. xxi.)

hearing of Lambert from everybody just what you say of him, recognising the benefit of having negotiator and commander in one, if possible, and having to act through an officer of high rank *not* under my authority<sup>1</sup>, I can't reproach myself with a fault in employing him though war did follow". In the same letter Lord Dalhousie pointed out that the causes of the war were more deep-seated: "But, while I say this, I do not at all mean that but for his act (i.e., the seizure of the King's ship) the war would not have been just as it has been". In his final Minute Lord Dalhousie wrote: "Holding to the wisdom of Lord Wellesley's maxim, that an insult offered to the British flag at the mouth of the Ganges should be resented as promptly and as fully as an insult offered at the mouth of the Thames, I should, under any circumstances, have regarded it as sound policy to exact reparation for wrong done to British subjects from any native state". His Minute of February 12, 1852, and his letter to Couper, dated April 24, 1852, conclusively prove that he was fighting to maintain British prestige in the East<sup>2</sup>.



<sup>1</sup>. Lambert belonged to the Royal Navy.

<sup>2</sup> Hall observes, "Probably Dalhousie erred in being over-anxious to maintain British prestige, if necessary by force of arms." (*The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*, Introduction, p. xx.)

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SECOND BURMESE WAR : NAVAL AND MILITARY OPERATIONS

Soon after his arrival in Calcutta Lord Dalhousie began to make preparations for the conflict which he was at the same time trying to avert by patient negotiations. His biographer claims that these preparations were "organised with a military genius that won the admiration of his colleagues and commanded success". This claim every careful reader of the official documents may be expected to accept.

Lieutenant-General Godwin was selected by the Commander-in-Chief, Sir William Gomm, to command the expedition, and Rear-Admiral Austen, Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Naval Forces in the Eastern Seas, was placed in charge of naval operations. The "whole political authority connected with the expedition" was vested in the General. Lord Dalhousie described him as follows : "He is strong, vigorous, and active in body and mind. He commanded a brigade during the last (Burmese) war, knows the people and the country thoroughly, and appears to me to have very sound views as to the proper mode of dealing with them politically as well as militarily." On another occasion the Governor-General wrote : "They say he is old ; so he is in years, but a man of fifty (as compared with men's efficiency in this country) very active in body and mind, and gallant as steel". Those who served under Godwin in 1852 testify to

his ability and energy. On April 12, when the capture of Rangoon was proceeding, Laurie, a contemporary writer who took part in the war, noted in his journal : "No man seemed to bear the fatigues of the day better than the gallant General; he was busy everywhere, animating the troops by his presence". Another officer's diary contains the following statement: "The General is very popular, being always kind in his deportment to all who address him. His disregard of his own personal safety, and of the bullets of the enemy, on the 12th and 14th of April, the cool manner he rode about, when many about him were bobbing their heads, stamp him as a 'brave man'.

Godwin's experience in the First Burmese War led him to take cautious views which did not appeal to the vigorous mind of the young Governor-General. Lord Dalhousie wrote on October 2, 1852: "The war of 1824-25-26 was a perfect war, and nothing that was not done then can be done now —everything that was done then must be done over again now". So thought Godwin, but Lord Dalhousie could not agree with him. He knew "the essential difference of circumstances between 1852 and 1824". He knew how to deal with the difficulties of transport, scarcity of food, and malaria. He knew that the resources of the rich provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim would be available to the military authorities. Godwin, obstinately loyal to his experience, was at first "adverse to the thought of keeping the force at Rangoon during the monsoon". Lord Dalhousie "invited him to be his guest, and with tact and perseverance set him-

self to overcome these scruples . . . . General Godwin yielded, as others had done, a captive to the personal influence of his host

"There were two military and naval services, those of the Crown and those of the Company respectively, between whom friction had to be prevented, especially in the matter of the higher appointments. Further, the expeditionary force was composed of detachments from the then separate armies of the Bengal and Madras Presidencies, and extraordinary care had to be taken in apportioning to each the departments it was to furnish and the special appointments the officers might fill". Sir William Lee-Warner describes Lord Dalhousie's efforts to hold the balance true between the claims of the armies in the following words: "Since the supreme command went to a Queen's officer, the Company's services were gratified by the several brigadiers being chosen from their constituent parts. The jealousy between the armies of Bengal and Madras was soothed by due regard being paid to the Presidency from which the departments were sent. Thus Bengal furnished the medical establishment and the artillery park; and the heads of those departments, as well as the Adjutant-General, were chosen from that Presidency. To Madras fell the appointments of Quartermaster-General, the Judge Advocate-General, and the officer in command of the field artillery; while each of these Presidencies sent its own commissariat".

Lord Dalhousie received from the Governor of Madras nothing more than grudging co-operation. "Sir Henry

Pottinger, piqued at not being taken into consultation about the campaign, refused to embark the Madras troops except upon the personal responsibility of the Governor-General. As a matter of fact the Madras troops were enlisted for general service, and the responsibility for moving them was vested in the Governor-General by Statute. The wounded military vanity of the Governor of Madras was overcome, and indeed he had no alternative but to obey. His objections, however, caused annoyance and delay.<sup>1</sup> The Madras contingent arrived in Burma a little later than the Bengal troops.

In Bengal a serious difficulty unexpectedly arose. The 38th Native Infantry, known as the Bengal Volunteers, refused to go to Burma by sea. Dr. Hall says that their refusal was due to "caste reasons." Sir William Hunter says that the men objected because they were enlisted for service in India only. Sir William Lee-Warner places the responsibility on the tactlessness of Colonel Burney, the commandant of the regiment. Lord Dalhousie noted in his diary : "I could not fail to remember the melancholy incident in the same station of Barrackpore on the same occasion of the march of troops for a Burmese war, when from some misunderstanding and want of judicious and temperate handling, the Native troops were at length massacred as mutineers". In a letter

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Hunter, *The Marquess of Dalhousie*, p. 114. Lord Dalhousie wrote on June 27, 1852 : "Sir Henry Pottinger has behaved very ill to me—sulking from the first, from I know not what cause. I have to write folios to meet such unreasonable expectations and still more unreasonable complaints." On October 20, 1852, he wrote again : "Even the Madras papers, which are rabid against Bengal and myself, give up his case."

dated August 15, 1852, he observes, "This was a poor spirit, but it was not disloyalty, or mutiny, or insubordination, or any of the hard names it has been called. The men had a right to decline, and they acted perfectly within their military rights in declining." He saved the situation by altering the destination of the regiment and by ordering them to proceed to Arakan by road *via* Dacca. Sir William Lee-Warner describes the attitude of the regiment as one of "doubtful subordination," and points out that on May 11, 1857, the main-guard at the Kashmir Gate of Delhi, composed of men of the same regiment, refused to fire on the mutineers.

Lord Dalhousie surmounted the difficulties of transport by requisitioning ships from Bombay, by constructing a road from Dacca to Akyab, and by sending 300 elephants to the theatre of war for the transport of artillery. *The Bombay Times*, February 25, 1852, notes that Lord Falkland, Governor of Bombay, "proceeded yesterday forenoon to inspect the splendid Steam Flotilla which has been fully equipped within the last week for service in the Burman waters." When the Bengal Volunteers were ordered to proceed to Arakan, it was decided "to set about the task of linking Calcutta and Rangoon by a road passing through Dacca, Akyab, over the Taungup pass to Promes, and thence to Rangoon. The first part of this gigantic operation, involving the reconditioning of an old road from Dacca to Chittagong to Akyab, 200 miles in extent, which would enable the rivers Naf and Mayu to be conveniently bridged, and the construction of a raised roadway along it, was put in hand with all possible speed, and was

reported almost finished within six months of its commencement".

There remained the serious problems of food supply and sanitation. Lord Dalhousie knew that "the losses incident to a Burmese campaign were due, not so much to the fighting power of the enemy, as to the malaria of the country, and the sickness caused by exposure to sun<sup>1</sup> and rain".<sup>2</sup> The arrangements he made left nothing to be desired. General Godwin wrote: "The care and provision which has been made to enable us to meet the weather is parental. There are to be bake-houses and a constant supply of fresh meat, hospitals at Amherst to relieve me, and arrangements to carry the sick thither." Arrangements were made for the speedy construction of 71 barracks at Rangoon and Prome. By a liberal commissariat Lord Dalhousie claimed that he had 'abolished the morning dram'. The supply of spirit to the troops was carefully checked.<sup>3</sup> Sir William Lee-Warner observes, "These measures were rewarded with the success they deserved, for during the second Burmese war the proportion of deaths by disease and sickness was generally lower than that

<sup>1</sup> On April 12 Laurie noted in his journal, "It was not yet near noon, and the sun had made severe havoc among several members of our small army the medical officers and their subordinates administering relief by pouring cold water over the patients."

<sup>2</sup> Hunter, *The Marquess of Dalhousie*, p. 111. Many sentences in Lord Dalhousie's private letters reveal his anxiety for the health of the troops. See Baird, *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, pp. 199, 214-15, 238, 253.

<sup>3</sup> Commodore Lambert issued the following regulation for the port of Rangoon, "Spirits and Wines of any description are prohibited, without a special order. . . ."

prevailing among the troops in the plains of India. Such illness as there was arose from the excessive consumption of pine-apples, which were sold at the rate of one hundred for a shilling, and proved at that price an irresistible temptation to the British soldier".<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to compare the health of the troops at Rangoon in November, 1824, with that in June-July, 1852. The following lines give a graphic description of the sufferings of the soldiers in 1824 :

" . . . . . the privations and sufferings of the troops at Rangoon were painfully aggravated. The continued use of salt provisions<sup>2</sup> had added to the diseases which preyed on them before, scurvy—a frightful scourge anywhere, but on the humid delta of a huge river, a foe to human health, which seemed to defy extirpation      Private adventurers had brought sheep and poultry to this mart of starvation. But they were few in number, and were sold at rates incredibly exorbitant. They furnished only an ephemeral repast for the tables of a few of the half-famished officers . . . . . the rations of the soldier consisted of rice, . . . . . salted beef and pork, . . . . and biscuit seldom fresh, and commonly swarming with animalcules, or mouldy from long detention under hatches, or in damp magazines. The supply of medicines was not abundant, nor assorted with a view to peculiar ailments      Dropsical symptoms manifested

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that even in 1824 pine-apples were abundant, and "the heedless voracity with which such unripe rarities were swallowed by hungry soldiers proved fatal to hundreds of dysenteric soldiers."

<sup>2</sup> In 1852 fresh rations were issued from April 21 and "thereafter salt rations were only needed twice a week."

themselves extensively. Dyspepsia, and acute hepatitis were yet more common. Diarrhoea and dysentery committed lamentable ravages. For patients, there were neither milk, vegetables, farinaceous food, nor nutritive broths."

*The Englishman*, July 2, 1852, declared that the health of the troops at Rangoon was satisfactory. "The deaths were principally from cholera; but dysentery afterwards prevailed." During July, 1852, one regiment "lost nearly a man a day, which it might not have done, had it been possible to prepare suitable barracks for them." Another regiment suffered considerably in its officers; as early as the beginning of June, 1852, there was hardly an officer fit for duty, all being either sick or absent. The delay in the construction of the barracks was unavoidable. On May 12, 1852, Laurie noted in his journal: "Timber, ready cut, has arrived from Rangoon; but is it feared the barracks will not be completed in less than two months."

Lord Dalhousie knew that he would have to regulate the campaign according to climatic conditions. In his diary he wrote that he was 'resolved' not to "engage in a war with Ava with the hot season approaching; but would commence operation only with the opening of the cold season of 1852." In a minute dated March 23, 1852, which formed the basis of the instructions officially communicated to General Godwin by the Government of India, Lord Dalhousie expressed his anxiety to "avert war upon a more extended scale at the end of the coming monsoon." If the King of Burma refused to comply with the demands incorporated in the letter of

February 18, General Godwin was requested to 'strike promptly a powerful blow' which might "reduce the Burmese to reason." He was reminded that "the object of dispatching promptly the present force is to seize the last chance of preventing the necessity for sending a large army hereafter."<sup>1</sup> He was expected to occupy Martaban and Rangoon. If the Burmese made overtures for peace after the occupation of these ports, the General was instructed to offer the following terms :

"1st. The payment of 15 lacs of rupees. 2nd. The payment of 3 lacs of rupees, in addition to the above sum, for every month which may elapse after the 1st May, until full payment is made. 3rd. Until these conditions shall be fulfilled, the British troops shall remain in undisturbed possession of such captured places as they may choose to retain.<sup>2</sup> 4th. If the conditions shall not be fulfilled on or before

<sup>1</sup> In view of this clear statement it is difficult to accept Sir William Hunter's view : "From the outset he (i.e., Lord Dalhousie) perceived that the Burmese Emperor would not accept the teaching of a few distant defeats on the sea-coast." (*The Marquess of Dalhousie*, p. 112.)

<sup>2</sup> When General Godwin objected to Lord Dalhousie's plan of retaining Rangoon during the rainy season, the Governor-General "desired that he should do so, if it could be done with safety to the health of the troops ; but if on his arrival there, after a careful consideration of the subject on the spot, he should still object he would be invested with a 'discretionary power to withdraw them.' (Lee-Warner, *The Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, Vol. I, pp. 422-23). Hence the third condition, which, Lord Dalhousie wrote in his Minute of March 23, "enables us either to retain possession of the whole we may have captured, or, without disadvantage or discredit, to retire from Rangoon, if it should appear desirable to do so."

the 1st October, the Government of India will take such measures as it may think right".

Obviously, as Hunter says, Lord Dalhousie was "determined to make the Emperor (of Burma) contribute to the cost of the war, which had been forced on by His Majesty's refusal of redress".

The expeditionary force was made up of separate contingents from Calcutta and Madras, with a squadron from Bombay.

The following troops were ordered from Bengal :

- 1 Company European Artillery.
- Her Majesty's 18th Royal Irish.
- Her Majesty's 80th Regiment of Foot.
- 40th Regiment Native Infantry.

The following troops were ordered from Madras:

- 3 Companies European Artillery.
- 3 Companies Sappers and Miners.
- Her Majesty's 15th Regiment of Foot.
- 3 Regiments of Native Infantry.

By the middle of February the Madras Government received orders to keep troops in readiness "for immediate embarkation for Rangoon, if necessary". On March 28 orders were received for immediate embarkation. On March 31 the embarkation took place ; 4,388 people (officers, soldiers and followers) embarked from Madras.

Six steamers (total tonnage 5,087) were requisitioned from Bombay. Five steamers (total tonnage 3,140) were

available in Calcutta. Besides, seven transports (total tonnage 3,769) were also available. Thus 11,996 tons of shipping were proposed to be employed in the expedition.

On March 23 Lord Dalhousie noted in a Minute: "The troops from this Presidency have either been despatched, or are ready to embark . . . The troops from Madras, if they have not already sailed, will sail in accordance with instructions from this Government They will be conveyed by a squadron of steamers, powerfully armed, which has been provided by the Bombay Government with the utmost promptitude, and in the highest efficiency . . . the whole force will be at the rendezvous in the Rangoon river, by the 1st of April." On March 6, 1852, Lord Dalhousie wrote to a friend, "Considering that we have had to communicate with Governments more than 1000 miles distant, with *foot-runners* as the only mail, I think that to order, collect, and bring this force to its destination at Rangoon within forty-eight days is not bad work for the East."

General Godwin reached Calcutta from Meerut on March 3 and started for Rangoon on March 25. The force which had been placed under his command was by that time "complete in all respects." He arrived at Rangoon on April 2. The Madras troops arrived there on April 7. Admiral Austen left Penang on March 28 and arrived at Rangoon on April 1. The force employed in the expedition included 19 ships, 8,489 men, and 159 guns.

The preliminary skirmishes began on April 2, when the Burmese fired upon the "Proserpine" which, in return, blew up the offending stockade. On April 5, Commodore Lambert destroyed two Burmese stockades below Rangoon, "thus clearing the way for the advance of the squadron".

On the same day Martaban was captured by the joint operations of the Army and the Navy, and this important incident may be rightly regarded as the beginning of the war. Martaban was an important place, and easily defensible; but the Burmese failed to make good use<sup>1</sup> of their advantage. Laurie writes, "The town to be attacked had been considered by the Burmese a position of high importance. And there can be no doubt that it is so. In a military point of view, it is capable of making a very formidable defence<sup>1</sup> with few troops engaged, and a loss of life on our side hardly worth mentioning<sup>2</sup>, the occupation of an important position formed a brilliant commencement to the campaign". The peculiarly strong position of Martaban was thus described by General Godwin in his despatch to the Government of India:

<sup>1</sup> Laurie quotes the testimony of an "expectant warrior from Moulmein": "We shall have a great deal of trouble in crossing the river, and lose a great many men as the enemy are five to one of our troops. The enemy had stockaded about the foot of the hill; near this a large pagoda offered another point of defence. A line of brickwork also served to strengthen the position."

<sup>2</sup> "The only casualties that occurred in the squadron were on board the *Rattler*, where one seaman was wounded in the arm, and two of the Madras Native Infantry." Lee-Warner says that the two regiments which led the assault lost only 8 men, but "on board ship the casualties were more numerous."

"Martaban stands on a noble sheet of water, with a river line of defences of 800 yards. Inland lies a large pagoda, a wall running along the whole front, with an ascent from the water's edge of about 500 feet, on the top of which small pagodas stand, the slope being partially covered with fine trees and close jungle". The attack began at daybreak ; at 8 a.m. Martaban was won. It was reported that about 5,000 Burmese were engaged in its defence. A small garrison was left at Martaban to hold the place.

We have so frequently referred to Burmese stockades that it may not be out of place here to indicate the general character of these defences. Laurie quotes the following description of what he calls "this formidable style of uncivilized fortifications":

"Conceive a row of upright timbers extending for miles, as they do round the entire place, except in parts of the north and east sides, each timber fit to be the main mast of a ship, these timbers three deep and so close to each other that a walking-stick could not be passed between ; behind these upright timbers is a row of horizontal ones, laid one above another ; and behind all is a bank of earth twenty-four feet broad on the top, and forty-five feet at the base ; the height of the top of the uprights, from the bottom of the ditch in which they are deeply planted, is generally fourteen feet. The upper part of the ditch, and that nearest the stockade, is filled with a most formidable *abbatis*, in the shape of the pointed branches of trees, stuck firmly into the earth, and pointing outwards ; beyond this is the deep part

of the ditch, which, in the rains, is of course filled with water. The upright timbers are strengthened with connecting planks, the ends of which are inserted on their tops, the other end of the plank being similarly secured by strong wooden pins in the bank inside. They are of such enormous, massive thickness, that firing at the face of a stockade would be a throwing away of powder". Two modern writers say with reference to the stockades, "It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the Burmese combatants operated underground".<sup>1</sup>

The next exploit of the British military and naval forces was the capture of Rangoon (April 11-14, 1852). Rangoon was a strongly defended town. General Godwin wrote : "The present position of Rangoon is entirely altered since the last war ; within a few years, the old town, which stood on the river bank, has been utterly destroyed, its bricks now lying in heaps on its site. A new town has been formed about a mile and a quarter from the river ; it is nearly a square, with a *bund* or mud wall about sixteen feet high, and eight broad : a ditch runs along each side of the square ; and on the north side, where the Pagoda stands, it has been very cleverly worked into the defences, to which it forms a sort of citadel". Laurie says, "Mr. C. M. Crisp, merchant at Rangoon and Moulmein, less than a month ago wrote to the Government of India regarding the strong position we were now about to attack. Four months since, on the upper terrace of the great pagoda at Rangoon, he counted eight pieces of cannon at each of the three principal entrances to

<sup>1</sup> Ritchie and Evans, *Lord Amherst, Rulers of India Series*, p. 93.

the same terrace, viz., at the south, west, and east ; at the north entrance only one cannon was placed, making in all about twenty-five pieces, three of which were eighteen-pounders, the rest may have been from six to twelve-pounders. Had heard that a number of swivel guns were kept in readiness at the pagoda ; but never saw any. Along the south front of the temple, at the lower part, a wall had been built by order of the late King, with embrasures for cannon ; this being the principal entrance, the Burmese authorities had taken great trouble to defend it. The north side is the weakest point. On the west side a range of go-downs for grain had been built. The *bund* (rude rampart) enclosing the new town, is very similar to the one round the cantonment at Moulmein, about fifteen feet high, and twelve feet broad at the top ; twenty feet from the *bund* a ditch ran all round, about twenty feet wide, and from six to twelve feet deep. Government House, in the new town, was in a state of defence. Mr. Crisp counted twelve pieces of cannon in the compound, also two twenty-four pounders. Some guns were also at the custom house and wharf ; altogether, he considered there might be forty pieces of ordnance at Rangoon".

On April 10, the ships, steamers, and transports commenced an advance up the river, and anchored below the Hastings Shoal that evening. Laurie notes, "This forenoon was one of great excitement among the majority on board. People doing things in place and out of place ; some looking

at plans, and examining swords and pistols. The deck presented a scene of extraordinary animation. . . .

The shoal was crossed on the morning of April 11. When the British ships took up their positions, fire was opened upon them from the stockades on either side, which was returned with shot and shell. These operations "ended in the general destruction of the whole line of defences, though the fire of the enemy proved fatal to many on board the shipping". The firing "completely cleared the ground for nearly a mile for the landing of the British troops. An accidental shell destroyed a large stockade, south-west of the Dagon Pagoda, mounting nine 18-pounder guns, which would doubtless have done great mischief to British shipping, if not thus silenced so early". Laurie recalls the scene enthusiastically, ". . . all the work soon became filled with black smoke and vivid flame-up, up to the bright skies ascending, till the scene became one of extreme beauty and awful grandeur!" Then the attack was chiefly directed to Dalla. The stockades were silenced; and a party of seamen and marines, in four boats, effected a landing and took the place by storm, the defenders having fled in every direction. All the stockades that had been taken were set fire to and burnt in succession. Laurie proudly records, "The navy had acted as a pioneer of true civilization".

The main operations began on April 12. "There was little sleep last night among many of us", says Laurie, "the excitement attendant on preparation for work had kept away its refreshing influence. About half-past three this morning,

the decks of the several steamers and vessels were crowded with living creatures, all eagerly sharing the bustle which invariably precedes the landing of troops in an enemy's country". The troops began to land at four o'clock in the morning, without opposition from the Burmese. It was discovered that Dagon Pagoda was not so far from the ships as was laid down in the charts, being at a good shelling distance ; the ships accordingly commenced throwing shells into it. Soon after landing the Bengal guns were ordered to move in advance. General Godwin wrote: "They had not proceeded far; however, when from an opening on some rising ground on our right, guns opened on us, and shortly after skirmishers showed themselves in the jungle. This was a new mode of fighting with the Burmese ; no instance having occurred last war of their attacking our flanks, or leaving their stockades, that I remember ever to have taken place they are now not only good shots, but bold in their operations and clever in selecting their ground, and covering themselves. Our casualties for the past three days will prove it—our dress exposing us, and their garb and colour concealing them".<sup>1</sup> Laurie remarks, "They had profited by time, and, perhaps, by European instructions".

The Burmese artillery fire proceeded from the White

<sup>1</sup> Laurie says about the skirmishes : "It was amusing enough to see them chevied through the bushes, across the plain, where the Artillery were drawn up, by the European soldiers. Crack ! Crack ! Crack !—away they ran, as fast as their heels could carry them ! But the retreat of many was only temporary. Towards dusk, they showed themselves in front of our camp ; but a few rounds of canister quickly drove them back into their jungles."

House Picket, "a very strong position, and just in the way of our advance". Laurie says that after the capture of the place "a vast quantity" of ammunition was found there : "The grape was of the usual barbarous description, common among some of the hill-tribes of India : badly shaped iron bullets or bits of iron, closely packed in a canvass bag, dipped in dammer. Into a well outside, all ammunition that could be found was thrown. The work, for a Burmese one, was very strong, and they had evidently taken much trouble in its construction. . . . In the last war the White House was surrounded by a brick wall, which this time they again surrounded with a stockade, at a distance of about ten feet, filling the interval with rammed earth. This formed a good parapet, to which they gave a reverse slope, so as to get up and mount their guns on it. Some excellent guns were found of iron and brass ; two of the latter kind were deemed handsome enough afterwards to be sent to Calcutta. The work had on its front face an insignificant ditch. In the centre of the little fort was the White House, from which the place took its name. . . . The enemy knew every inch of the ground we should necessarily pass over to get at them ; and it is highly probable they had practised for some time with ranges to bear upon certain points, which may account for their accuracy of fire in the morning".

A battery of four guns was opened on the White House Picket. "The fire of these guns was very effective". Unfortunately, Major Oakes, one of the officers in charge of the battery, was struck down by the 'terrific' heat of the sun,

and died. Shortly before the Artillery ceased firing, a storming party was formed of four Companies of Europeans. The party "advanced under cover of a jungle, on getting through which the musketry was so steady and effective from the stockades and adjoining buildings, that a great many of our party were killed and wounded ; amongst them were several officers". An officer named Major Fraser "took the ladders to the stockade most gallantly, and alone mounted the defences of the enemy, where his example soon brought around him the storming party, which carried the stockade, but at very severe loss on our part"<sup>1</sup>. Laurie says, "The Burmese, on our carrying the stockade, fled precipitately ; but many of these resolved to give us further troubles in the jungles. They left many dead about the place".

It was about 11 o'clock, and "the sun had made severe havoc among several members of our small army". 5 officers were struck, of whom 2 died. The storming party was completely exhausted. Laurie says, "Many of the European soldiers suffered, and here and there were to be seen, on the ground for the advance, to the left of the White House Stockade, the medical officers and their subordinates administering relief by pouring cold water over the patients". So General Godwin decided to halt where he was, and "to concentrate the force in as strong a position as the country admitted of. We were teased by parties of the enemy hovering around us till the night closed, when all was quiet under the protection of our guns, which had been brought up to

<sup>1</sup> General Godwin's report.

the front.<sup>1</sup> Laurie adds a vivid picture: "Huge hollow shots and carcasses were continually projected, doing fearful execution. Sometimes the effect, from our camp, was terribly sublime. It seemed as if many a wrathful deity were, like Vishnu, hurling the fiery *discus* through the air!"

April 13 was spent in preparations for "the grand advance on the great Pagoda." Heavy battery guns were landed and taken into the camp. Shells were occasionally thrown from the ships, frequently setting fire to the stockades in various places. In the afternoon the Governor of Rangoon left the Pagoda "in despair of being able to hold it."

On April 14 "the troops were under arms at 5 a.m., all in as fine a temper as ever men were." Laurie says, "The halt of yesterday had refreshed them considerably, notwithstanding the intense heat; and recollection of the 12th prompted them to double exertion, if such were possible, today". The troops marched through thick jungle for about a mile, "when we opened the Great Pagoda, and its fire was turned on us". While heavy English guns were being placed in battery, "the enemy's artillery had got the range of our crowded position, and their skirmishers had somewhat closed upon us, and it took 500 men to keep down their fire". About an hour before noon, Captain Latter proposed to General Godwin an attack on the eastern entrance of the Great Pagoda and asked his permission to lead the storming party. As the English troops were "dropping fast" where they stood, the General "determined on an immediate

<sup>1</sup> General Godwin's report.

assault . He described the storming of the Pagoda in the following words: "The advance to the east entrance to the Pagoda was of about 800 yards, which the troops crossed in a most steady manner, under the fire of the walls crowded with the enemy, the remainder of the force following closely. When the storming party reached the steps, a tremendous rush was made to the upper terrace, and a deafening cheer told that the Pagoda no longer belonged to the Burmese. The enemy ran in confusion from the southern and western gates, where they were met by the fire of the steamers. All the country around has fallen with the Pagoda".

The casualties in the navy were : 3 killed, 27 wounded. The casualties in the army were : 19 killed, 147 wounded. The success of the operations was due in a great measure to the co-operation of the army and the navy. General Godwin wrote to the Government of India on April 18, "In this united service there has been not only a cordial co-operation between the army and navy, but so much good-heartedness, that their joint efforts have tended to secure the rapid success of this expedition".

Before receiving any account of the capture of Rangoon Lord Dalhousie wrote to a friend, "As an enemy they (i.e., the Burmese) are in no respect formidable ; but a war against them, their country, and their climate, will be a costly and serious job". General Godwin's report—"they are now not only good shots, but bold in their operations, and clever in selecting their ground, and covering themselves"—must have disillusioned him to some extent. Laurie repeatedly refers to

the accuracy of Burmese shots<sup>1</sup>. The Burmese soldier was not a coward. Laurie says, ". . . while passing along, we frequently came across a Burmese soldier who lay dead, with a look of determination, and a smile of apparent contempt on his countenance". The fortifications built by them were not easily assailable. Their infantry equipments were "tolerably complete". They appear to have placed great reliance on their Artillery. 98 guns and 70 jingals were captured by General Godwin. Laurie says that "about their Artillery there hovered a rude science, civilization struggling with ignorance, crudities seeking shape and organization." It is difficult to give a correct estimate of the Burmese who fell during the operations. Laurie says, ". . . out of 18,000 who were at first prepared to meet us, and 20,000 is the number generally supposed, only 200 bodies were discovered, it does not follow that only that number fell. It is the Burmese custom on the field to carry away, if possible, the dead and wounded. This is considered a sacred duty, and it is performed with every alacrity. A bamboo is quickly passed through the cloth encircling the loins, and the dead man is carried off. Should he be only wounded, more care and ceremony are used to take the sufferer to some place of refuge." Laurie quotes the testimony of an Armenian to the effect that "a portion of the Burmese army became dispirited by overfatigue and disease," and says, "Bad as the Rangoon

<sup>1</sup> So accurate was the range that an intelligent Bengal officer, who had been engaged in several of the great Punjab battles, declared that he had not, on those occasions, "bobbed" his head as much as he had done on April 14.

Governor was, he does not appear to have had recourse, like the famous Bundoola,<sup>1</sup> to the infernal device of chaining his soldiers to the guns, in order that they might never cease firing till victory was achieved, or death had laid them low."

The news of the capture of Rangoon reached Calcutta on April 23, and the Governor-General-in-Council directed that "in honour of this success, a royal salute shall be fired at every principal station in India." To a friend Lord Dalhousie wrote, "This is a great success, and though all loss is lamentable, I think the victory has not been dearly purchased." In another letter he wrote about General Godwin: "General Godwin's gallantry in the field was most conspicuous—too much so for a general—and his exposure of himself to the sun equally reckless. As he is safe through it, it is all very well, for it inspires the men."

From April 15 onwards the British troops began to encamp near and within the Great Pagoda. "Troops were encamped here and there, as a matter of necessity, until a fixed position could be appointed." On April 22 General Godwin reported to the Government of India: "The inhabitants are partially settling themselves in the vicinity of the Old Town; and great numbers of Burmese are in our employ as coolies".<sup>2</sup> On April 23 a patrolling party visited

<sup>1</sup> Maha Bandula was one of the leading Burmese generals in the First Burmese War. For his career, see the present author's *The Eastern Frontier of British India*.

<sup>2</sup> On May 11 Laurie noted in his journal, "The Burmese are flocking into Rangoon daily. New houses are being erected on the sites of the burned ones . The bazar is already well supplied with fish, fruit, vegetables, and poultry in abundance."

Kemmendine, situated about two miles north-west of Rangoon. "In the principal street of Kemmendine, men, women, and children seemed to be engaged in their usual employments. It did not appear that the voice of war had at all disturbed the tenor of their domestic tranquillity." On April 29 Laurie noted in his journal: "At present, Rangoon, so hot, so monotonous, so relaxing, is by no means comfortable. The grand excitement over, there is now a stupid reaction." On May 3 houses began to be built for the monsoon, "Burmese carpenters working for us cheerfully and evincing a certain rude skill." Timber, ready cut, arrived from Moulmein.

We have already seen that the Governor of Rangoon left the Great Pagoda on April 13 "in despair of being able to hold it." After the capture of Rangoon unsuccessful attempts were made to trace his movements. On May 7 an expedition consisting of some 400 or 500 men left Rangoon in his pursuit, and a party of 60 marines went with them. The expedition advanced about seven miles inland, but "they arrived just in time to see the Governor decamping with two elephants, and a number of carts. The bulk of his property he had sent off the previous evening, having received intimation of the intended arrival of the steamers." The force returned to Rangoon on May 9. On May 11 intelligence was received at Rangoon that a British ship had very nearly caught the Governor of Rangoon.

On May 2 Lord Dalhousie wrote to a friend, "The Governor of Rangoon sent in a paper to General Godwin, after his retreat, to say we had beaten one army, no doubt,

but that there were two more still. Nevertheless, to prevent effusion of blood, he was willing to *allow* things to return to what they were before hostilities. These are the people whose insolence, it is said, we should pass without notice. General Godwin gave back the letter with a polite intimation to the effect that if he caught his Excellency, he would hang him. Provided he does not do it (which I have warned him against), the answer was in the proper style for these people." Laurie also refers to this offer of peace.

The next important incident is the capture of Bassein. Bassein occupies an important strategical position. During the First Burmese War it was occupied by British troops, and Sir Archibald Campbell had declared it to be the key of the Burmese Empire. "With Prome and Donabew it forms a right-angled triangle, of which Prome and Bassein constitute the hypotenuse. It may be some 85 or 90 miles nearly direct west from Rangoon. Its chief advantage consists in commanding one of the three great navigable branches of the Irrawaddy." The southern portion of the British province of Arakan lay in the neighbourhood of Bassein. The Governor-General expressed some anxiety about this; and General Godwin, accompanied by Commodore Lambert, proceeded to capture this Burmese outpost.

On May 17 General Godwin started with a detachment of 800 men, carried by "three fine vessels." On the evening of May 18 he anchored off Negrais Island, leading into the Bassein river. At 4 o'clock on May 19 he came in view of "the defences, about a mile long, of the city of Bassein

these consisted of one extensive stockade; with several hundred men in it, fully armed, and with cannon: The enemy looked at us, but did not show any disposition to molest us." This advance was praised by the Government of India in the highest terms:

"In ascending for sixty miles a river still very imperfectly known; in effecting the landing of the troops and capturing the city, the fort, and the stockaded defences on both sides of the river, fully garrisoned and armed; and in accomplishing all this with very unequal numbers, and within the limits of a single day; the combined forces at Bassein performed a gallant and spirited service, which well deserves the approbation and applause of the Government of India."

The position taken by the steamers was so "admirable" that General Godwin ordered the immediate landing of the troops. The Burmese appeared "completely surprised and paralyzed" by their approach. General Godwin "gave orders not to fire unless fired on<sup>1</sup>, and to take possession of the pagoda." About 400 men got on shore under the pagoda, before a shot was fired. Major Errington advanced on the pagoda and "carried it in most gallant style." Then the British troops attacked a mud fort, "most scientifically built, and of great extent, which could only have been constructed,

<sup>1</sup> Laurie says, "There is something magnificently cool, too, about the gallant Captain Latter—parleying with the Burmese behind their own works—to the effect that if they would not fire on us, we would not fire on them. The reply of the enemy was, that if our force advanced one step further, they would fire on us. Captain Latter rejoined, that in that case we would turn them out root and branch. At the same time a heavy discharge of musketry and jingals and round shot was poured into us."

under a despotism that commanded the labour of its subjects, in the short time they had been about it. It was not entirely completed in its details within." It was fully garrisoned and well-armed , and obstinately defended. The fort was taken within over a little after six o'clock. While these operations had been going on, Commodore Lambert was destroying a large stockade on the opposite bank of the river. General Godwin reported to the Government of India: "from every indication of preparation going on, the Government of this country intended to make it a most powerful place, and to repair the loss of Rangoon by establishing Bassein as their mart of communication with this country, as well as a powerful position to keep in subjection the Pegu population, so decidedly and ever our friends, and also to maintain a threatening attitude towards the south of Arracan." If the Government of India decided to "hold during the war this very important place", further arrangements would be necessary. The population was friendly; fresh meat was available; the barracks for the soldiers were excellent. So "a very little expense will make it a secure position."

After the fall of Bassein Commodore Lambert sent a ship a short distance up the river, to try to intercept the retreating army. The ship advanced for about 40 miles, arrested a person of high command at Bassein during the attack, and captured a boat used by the retreating Burmese soldiers. Another ship destroyed "some unoccupied stockades in the neighbourhood of the village of Naputa, which was accomplished without any opposition, assisted by the villagers."

Another ship went to Donabew, found that "this once famous strong-hold<sup>1</sup> was unoccupied and defenceless", and, proceeding further up the river, "fell in with" a large number of Burmese soldiers. The ship opened fire; the Burmese retreated to Henzada. The English sailors were "received by the natives with every demonstration of friendship," which was probably due to their anxiety for protection from the marauders and Burmese troops.

Hostilities then began at Martaban. On April 11 the British garrison there occupied a post controlled by the Burmese. On April 14 the British pickets at Martaban were attacked, but the Burmese were "beaten off with great spirit." On May 26 Martaban was attacked by a Burmese force of 10,000 or 12,000 men, which was beaten back by the British garrison stationed there. The *Moulmein Times*, May 28, 1852, wrote: "We understand that the Burmese force was commanded by the notorious Dacoit chief and robber Moung Shoay-loang, and that he had been sent from Ava to retake Martaban, or forfeit his head in case of failure. Wednesday last was, according to the guardian angels of Moung Shoay-loang, considered the lucky day for the exploit; but with what success has been seen."

The British forces next directed their attention to the city of Pegu. "Pegu was reduced by Alaungpaya, after his conquest of Burmah's rival kingdom, to a state of comparative ruin and desolation . . . Conciliation was attempted. But

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of the battle of Donabew (First Burmese War), see the authors *The Eastern Frontier of British India*, pp. 294-99, 301, 310-11.

every endeavour to conciliate the Peguese by Burmese strategy signally failed." In an official despatch to the Government of India, dated May 24, 1852, General Godwin referred to the Peguese as "so decidedly and ever our friends." The immediate occasion for sending the expedition was "an appeal for help against their Burmese enemies . . . preferred by the Talaings."

"The city of Pegu is situated some 75 miles nearly north from Rangoon, to which it is far inferior as a commercial position." The expedition, led by Major Cotton and Captain Tarleton, started on the morning of June 3. "By nightfall the steamer had reached within 16 miles of Pegu, where she anchored. From the narrowness and shallowness of the river it was not considered safe to proceed farther." Information was received that "a large number of Peguers had put themselves under the direction of one of their countrymen named Moungta; that they had assembled on the right bank of the river, where the day previous they had been engaged with a body of men under Moungyawik, the Burman Governor of Pegu," who had been "worsted"; that the Burmans had then "retired in the direction of Zangauain, situated on the river bank, immediately opposite Pegu." Moungta himself came to the English with about 1500 men ("imperfectly armed"). His troops were to be distinguished by wearing a small white flag in the cap.

Pegu stood on the left bank of the river, which was not more than 60 yards wide at this point. The Burmese were waiting in the village of Zangauain which stood immediately

opposite, on the right bank of the river. It possessed a small pagoda and was surrounded by a low growth of jungle.

The troops under Major Cotton landed at half-past 9 o'clock in the morning, and "proceeded in skirmishing order . . . along the right bank of the river for nearly two miles through heavy swamp and jungle, and drove the enemy completely across the river, in the direction of the Great Pagoda; when, hearing heavy firing from the direction of the boats", they returned to help the naval force under Captain Tarleton. In the meantime Captain Tarleton, seeing a party of the Burmese on the left bank, had proceeded to disperse them. A "smart engagement" took place: "the enemy stood with great resolution, until they were, in many instances, driven out by the bayonet; the defect in their firing was here very observable, as their shot in most cases struck the branches above our heads." At last the Burmese were compelled to retire to the Great Pagoda. Some Burmese, "seeing the unguarded state of the boats, pounced upon them, and took possession. Fortunately the Burmese were more anxious to plunder than to destroy the boats." The boats were recaptured by Major Cotton, who arrived on the right bank, and Captain Tarleton, who came from the left.

It was now one o'clock, and the troops were "much fatigued." Major Cotton decided to wait until 3 p.m. before attacking the Great Pagoda. But at 2 p.m. the alarm-bugle was sounded; "the Burmese had issued from the Pagoda in considerable strength, with the evident intention of attacking us. The troops lost not a moment in getting under arms.

and the seamen came on shore." After a "smart fire," Major Cotton drove them<sup>1</sup> into the jungle which surrounded the pagoda. Then the pagoda was hurriedly stormed. "So sudden was the assault that the enemy had not time to fire their guns, which were found loaded, and covering the entrances to the gates." It was impossible to pursue the Burmese, because the English troops "were much knocked up, having been under arms since one o'clock in the morning, and all overcome by the excessive heat and fatigue encountered during the day." The city of Pegu was then restored to a descendant of the former ruling dynasty.

After the capture of Pegu the "Proserpine," under Captain Brooking, was "sent up the Irrawaddy, and made good her way, . . . without serious opposition, to where that river divides itself, like the two prongs of a fork; or, say 80 miles below Prome. All that portion of the river below this point was thus surveyed." Then the "Proserpine" advanced again and explored the Irrawaddy "to within 30 miles of Prome, having thus penetrated into the very heart of the enemy's country." The ship destroyed some boats of grain and a stockade.

On July 9, Prome was occupied by Captain Tarleton. On July 10 he defeated the rear of General Bandula's army. 28 or 29 guns were captured. Prome remained in the possession

<sup>1</sup> Laurie says, ". . . so precipitate was their retreat that not a single Burmese was touched even by the long shots of the rifles."

of the English for 24 hours;<sup>1</sup> but the expedition "entirely freed the lower country of the presence of the enemy," and Captain Tarleton thought that they would not again "venture so far from Prome. This will be an incalculable blessing to the inhabitants, who evince to us everywhere the most friendly disposition, and only require security to become contented and happy." A few days later the "Pluto," under Commander Burbank, carried on "further successful operations against the enemy in the neighbourhood of Prome." The results of the operations are thus summarised by Commodore Lambert in an official despatch to the Governor-General:

"The river has been ascended to Prome, 56 guns have been captured, 10 war boats, and several boats containing military stores and ammunition have been burnt; and an army of 7000 men, commanded by one of the highest officers in the Burman Empire, dispersed, with the exception of 2000 who are collected in the neighbourhood of Prome, where, without artillery or defences, they are no longer formidable."

The initial objectives of the Government of India were thus attained within a few weeks of the arrival of the British troops in Burmese waters. "But the anticipated overtures of peace from Amarapoora were not made. No sign came from the Golden Feet. The Lord of Many White Elephants viewed the early successes of the foreigners with comparative

<sup>1</sup> Lord Dalhousie wrote: "The full benefit of the advance to Prome has not been secured, because it was impracticable, with the numbers they had, to hold what they had seized."

unconcern. Soon, he believed, with the development of the wet monsoon's greatest intensity, his generals cholera and fever would put a different complexion upon affairs. Then, when his enemies were decimated by disease, his invincible armies would drive them into the sea."<sup>1</sup> "Without land transport, and with the river flood subsiding, British troops could not reach Amarapura. Therefore His Majesty was content to maintain a dogged silence and to wait for the turn of the tide of invasion."<sup>2</sup>

Lord Dalhousie was naturally impatient. On May 30 he wrote to a friend, "We can hear of no troops, no fortifications anywhere. But the beasts don't give in; and this sort of passive resistance is perhaps as embarrassing for my part of the business as anything could be, for *I can't get a result.* They give and take no terms." On November 6 he wrote that the King of Burma was reported to be "cock-fighting, as usual," and added, "This beats Nero's fiddling while Rome burnt."

In an exhaustive Minute, dated June 30, 1852, the Governor-General stated that "overtures of peace" could not be anticipated "at present" and outlined certain "additional preparations", which he proposed to commence without delay, "for carrying on, with vigour, the war against Burmah, at the earliest date at which the opening season may permit". In order to "pursue the war, by an advance towards Ava", General Godwin wanted,

<sup>1</sup> Hall, *The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*, Introduction, pp. xxiv-xxv.

<sup>2</sup> Lee-Warner, *The Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, Vol. I, p. 430.

in addition to the force already placed under his command, "four brigades of infantry, each consisting of one European and two Native Corps, together with three batteries, one a horse field-battery, and two troops of horse-artillery". Lord Dalhousie stated that "no difficulty will be found in providing this force, without unduly weakening any quarter of the empire in its present circumstances". The line of advance and the plan of operations were to be decided in accordance with the advice of the military authorities; but Lord Dalhousie believed that no attempt would be made to advance from Arakan by the Aeng Pass.<sup>1</sup> The Secret Committee approved these plans in a letter dated September 6, 1852.

Lord Dalhousie knew that it was "tedious" and difficult to arrange details of military operations through correspondence; so he decided, with the approval of his colleagues, to pay a brief visit to Rangoon, "for the purpose of arranging personally with the military and naval commanders there, the plans of such further operations in Burmah, as circumstances may render necessary."

Lord Dalhousie arrived at Rangoon on July 27 and left for Calcutta on August 1. "Soon after his arrival in the river General Godwin and Commodore Lambert paid Lord

<sup>1</sup> This route was advocated by General Sir Archibald Campbell in 1829; but the geographical and military information collected since that date, the "widely different condition of affairs in the British provinces south of Burmah," and "the greater variety and extent of our resources now, as compared with the state of things which existed in 1829," led Lord Dalhousie "to question whether Sir Archibald Campbell would now give the same opinion as he recorded in 1829."

Dalhousie a visit. The weather was by no means auspicious for such an important event as the arrival of the head of the Indian Government on these shores. The day was rainy, and dark, and dreary-looking, as if it were determined to repel the message of light to Burmah. But, as usual at this season, it cleared up in the afternoon; and everything around seemed bright and beautiful." About the voyage Lord Dalhousie wrote to a friend, "We had a long passage, with a heavy head-sea down and regular monsoon weather coming back, blowing hard, with a great sea. I was not sick, but suffered from a bad ulcerated sore throat all the time. I could not speak without pain, or eat without agony; and as during my five days' stay I was compelled to *speak* all day, and to be present at a large party at *dinner* every evening, you may conceive what it was."

On his return to Calcutta Lord Dalhousie submitted to the Council "the results of my inquiries, and of my personal communications, while at the seat of War." He summed up "the state of our affairs in Burmah" as follows:

"We are masters of the sea-coast from east to west. We control by our steamers the whole of the streams of the Irrawaddy, from Prome to the Sea. With the exception of a few thousand men near Prome, and a still smaller body towards Martaban, no Burmese troops whatever can be heard of in the Lower Province. In the Upper Province, no army has been collected. No defences have been constructed at Prome, and no force remains there.

The Burmese have betrayed a total want of enterprise, courage, power, and resource. Large bodies of them retire at the mere sight of a steamer, or in the presence of a few Europeans, so soon as they are landed. At the same time, no sign has been shown of an intention to submit, or to treat, nor is there the slightest ground for believing that any such overtures will be made.

The population of the country, while they evidently cannot be depended upon to fight, either for us or for themselves, have everywhere shown the strongest and most unequivocal desire to aid our operations, to furnish us with supplies, and to obtain our protection.

Our troops are healthy, their discipline excellent, their spirits confident and high."

It was necessary to determine, without delay, the question whether the ensuing campaign should include a march upon the capital of Burma, or should be restricted to advance to Prome and occupation of Pegu.<sup>1</sup> In his Minute dated June 30, 1852, Lord Dalhousie stated "that if no further annexation of territory than that of the Province of Pegu, were contemplated, it would be expedient that the advance of the army should be restricted to the limits which

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that Lord Dalhousie wrote to a friend on May 2, "I propose to hold Rangoon till they submit; and if that does not occur in November, the army shall be under the walls of Ava in February."

it was intended permanently to occupy."<sup>1</sup> In Rangoon he discussed matters with General Godwin and Commodore Lambert. "He found the fire-eating old General anxious to push on right up to Amarapoora," and received from him an estimate of forces he would require for an advance upon Ava. When Lord Dalhousie "unfolded to him the views which the Government were inclined to entertain in favour of more restricted operations," General Godwin "alleged no military objections to the view" and stated that "5000 men at Prome would repel any force that an enemy might attempt to stockade with, or to offer any violence to the Pegu people."<sup>2</sup> In his Minute dated August 10 Lord Dalhousie explained the reasons which led him to reject the plan of capturing Amarapura. In the first place, an advance to Ava could not be made wholly by water; "a heavy land column would be unavoidable for some part of the way." But carts were extremely rare and roads there were none. The "vast amount of carriage held necessary to move even a small force" could be supplied "only at an enormous cost, which nothing but a proved indispensable necessity would justify this Government in incurring." Secondly, "judging by the course of the present

<sup>1</sup> On September 18, 1852, Lord Dalhousie wrote to a friend, " if we go to Ava . . . we must stay there: there can be no back-step in Indian drill." On August 7 he had assigned another reason: "*I will not advance one yard from Rangoon till I am satisfied that the home Government will not make me retire; because such an advance must commit the wretched Peguers, who actually implore our rule, to acts which will expose them to frightful cruelty if we leave them. To such a risk I will not expose them, equally on grounds of statesmanship and of humanity.*"

<sup>2</sup> Lord Dalhousie's Minute, August 10, 1852.

war, much loss need not be feared from the enemy: but some loss must be looked for from that cause: climate, fatigue, exposure, and disease, would sweep away more; and the expenditure of good and gallant lives, on such a march, would be far more costly than the expenditure of our treasure." Thirdly, "time would be unprofitably consumed, when it might be far better employed in securing our conquest, if we are permitted to occupy, or in removing our troops, if we should be ordered to evacuate." General Godwin declared that a march upon Ava "would . . . , occupy so many months as would render it necessary for the army to pass the hot season of 1853 at Ava." Thus "a state of actual hostilities, unconcluded by any declared result, would be protracted over almost as long a period as was occupied by the war from 1824 to 1826." Finally, "all this expenditure of treasure and of life—all this prolongation of a state of war—would be for no good end, after all. For as no one has advocated the retention of the upper provinces of the empire, we shall conquer, only to relinquish them."

These arguments were accepted by the members of the Council. Lord Dalhousie thereupon informed General Godwin that "the present operations of the army shall be limited to the complete subjection, and present military occupation, of the province of Pegu, up to whatever point to the northward of Prome we may, on examination, find it convenient to fix." The General was informed that the additional forces demanded by him "for the subjection of Pegu and its secure occupation" would be sent without delay.

The General's plan of postponing the advance to Prome "during the strength of the rains" was approved, but he was asked to lead the expedition "as soon as it can be undertaken, without serious risk to the health of the troops." "Since the available force at Rangoon will be greatly increased early in September; since the river communications will be quite secure; since the climate of Prome . . . will not then be injurious<sup>1</sup>; and since the political ends of the Government of India will be promoted by the further advance of the force to Prome"; it was suggested that the General might move his troops about that time.<sup>1</sup> General Godwin replied that he intended to send about 2000 men up to Prome about the 20th of September. He was only anxious because at Prome, which had "not one-tenth part of the capabilities of Rangoon," he would not be able "to get cover, however indifferent, for our men."<sup>2</sup>

Here we might pause to notice the gradual estrangement between Lord Dalhousie and General Godwin.<sup>2</sup> We have seen that at the beginning of the war the Governor-General entertained very high opinions about the General, but the progress of the war revealed certain defects which Lord Dalhousie could not ignore. On October 2, 1852, he wrote to a friend, "General Godwin has not been showing well lately. He has exhibited very broadly the petty jealousy of the navy, which I more than half suspected when I was there<sup>3</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> " . . . at Prome little rain falls after September."

<sup>2</sup> See Baird, *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, pp. 226-227, 236, 253, 233-234.

<sup>3</sup> At Rangoon.

and which the public has long asserted. He so far forgot himself as to put into an official despatch to the G.-G. in C<sup>1</sup>. this peevish remark—ill-tempered, as well as in his case peculiarly unjust and ungrateful—‘I would rather have charge of an army of 50,000 men in the field than of one of 5,000 dependent on naval co-operation’.<sup>2</sup> Those who remember Martaban, Rangoon, and Bassein will find it difficult to defend such a sentence. I have written rather decided to him upon this<sup>3</sup> and if he don’t mind he will have to eat stick”. On December 12, 1852, Lord Dalhousie wrote again, “ . . . his peevishness and petty jealousy of, and ungrateful injustice to, the navy, to which he owes everything, have lowered him fathoms in my estimation.” The General’s jealousy of the navy reached its climax when<sup>4</sup> he refused to sign the treaty with the King of Ava if Commodore Lambert signed before him<sup>5</sup>—“that is to say”, wrote Lord Dalhousie on April 30,

<sup>1</sup> Governor-General-in-Council.

<sup>2</sup> This statement of General Godwin was suppressed in the *Parliamentary Papers*.

<sup>3</sup> This ‘decided’ letter of the Governor-General was suppressed in the *Parliamentary Papers*.

<sup>4</sup> In March, 1853.

<sup>5</sup> After the death of Admiral Austen, the Commander-in-Chief of the Naval Forces, late in the year 1852, Commodore Lambert, who temporarily officiated in his place till the arrival of a new naval Commander-in-Chief from England, took precedence of General Godwin by virtue of his rank as officiating Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty’s Naval Forces in the Eastern Seas. General Godwin wrote: “ . . . with all deference and respect to the extraordinary decision that Commodore (Captain) Lambert ranking with any Brigadier Generals (Colonels) is my superior officer and to sign before me in the Treaty, I must be allowed to act, if unfortunately called on, as a General Officer in my position must, to uphold

1853, "though the Government had appointed him a Commissioner to sign, he would refuse to do so on a question of personal precedence, and would risk for that punctilio the loss of a treaty of peace between the nations. Supposing he was right on the question of precedence, nothing would justify his proposed act on that ground. Being wholly wrong, his case is desperate." Officially the Governor-General used stronger language : "I am reluctant to believe that any General Officer in Her Majesty's service would permit himself to intimate to the Government of India that he will deliberately disobey its commands, or that he would risk the evil effects upon public interests, which such an interruption of negotiation for peace might produce, even if he were prepared to disregard the personal consequences which his act would involve."

Unfortunately, an unreasonable jealousy of the navy was not General Godwin's only fault. He was old, slow and obstinate; he was not prepared to unlearn his experience of the First Burmese War. On October 2, 1852, Lord Dalhousie wrote to a friend, ". . . he is seventy, and like the men of that period, he is *laudator temporis acti* in the extreme. The war of 1824-25-26 was a perfect war, and nothing that was not done then can be done now—everything that was done then must be done over again new. The people—the river—the very geography can't be as the surveying officers

the honour of the Army." It was finally arranged that General Godwin was to sign the treaty first, and the Commodore second.

See Hall, *The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*.

report it, because 'I know Prome well,' and it was not so in 1825." On December 4 he wrote again: "Everybody down there is disgusted not only with his tardiness, but that he will hear no one, see no one, trust no one, believe no one—believe nothing except what he thinks himself, founded on what it was in 1825." In spite of the Governor-General's *carte blanche* the General did not spend enough money on intelligence: "He says he does not believe a word the people say, and will sanction nothing. It is said that it is only a bad workman who complains of his tools, but I really think I may complain of mine without bringing myself under the inference." Lord Dalhousie was not alone in complaining. On December 12, 1852, Lord Dalhousie wrote, "They have a good caricature in our 'Punch' this month, which illustrates correctly the state of public opinion here. A sailor of the *Fox* tucks up his shirt and knocks down a John Burman, while General Godwin, in full fig and buckling on his sword, looks on, and says, 'Oh dear! this is quite irregular, very irregular.' Even after the conclusion of the war the General embarrassed the Government in various ways. He acted against the instructions of the Government at the peace conference with the Burmese Envoys in April, 1853. He claimed as war booty for the soldiers all timber described vaguely as "found lying in logs" in Burma. He wrote to the Secret Committee with reference to rewards, &c. He refused detachments of troops for the protection of civil officers in unsubdued districts. In spite of so many provocations Lord Dalhousie did nothing to wound the old soldier. On March 25, 1853, Lord Dalhousie

wrote to a friend, "You ask me why I do not remove Godwin. It needs a very strong case to justify your removing an officer from a command, and thus destroying his professional reputation." In his letter to the Secret Committee, dated June 29, 1853, Lord Dalhousie commended the General to "the favour of Her Majesty's Government and of the Hon'ble Court of Directors", and added, "If on some occasions the Government of India has seen reason to dissent from, or to comment unfavourably upon, the views of the Major General, I trust that the Hon'ble Committee, now that all has ended well, will pass by those occasions and will have regard only to the records of our satisfaction and praise." After Godwin's death Lord Dalhousie wrote to a friend, "It is pleasing to me now to recollect that I did my best to obtain an honour, and to avert blame on his behalf."

The differences between Lord Dalhousie and General Godwin became acute after the capture of Prome in October, 1852.<sup>1</sup>

The flotilla arrived off Prome on the morning of October 9. On the squadron nearing the city, the Burmese opened fire with a couple of guns and musketry, which was returned by the steamers as they proceeded into the bay. The Burmese continued to keep up fire after Commodore Lambert had anchored. Some of the troops landed at half-past 4 without any opposition in a suburb to the north of the town, and

<sup>1</sup> Lord Dalhousie wrote to a friend on February 12, 1853, "..... up to the capture of Prome on 10th October, I generally approved his conduct; since then I have been much dissatisfied, though I have been reluctant to express it."

occupied a part of the town with the loss of only one man killed and a few wounded. Although the Burmese had occupied "a very fine position on a range of hills", they were unable to resist the invaders. On October 10 the remainder of the troops landed in the morning. It was found that the Burmese had left "in our possession an entirely evacuated town, overrun with thick and rank vegetation, and abounding in swamps". General Godwin came to know that a large force, probably about 18,000 men, had gathered ten miles east of Prome. He did not intend to disturb them immediately, "as by their concentration at that place the fine force now assembling here will have an opportunity of striking a blow which may put an end to much future opposition". This success was due in a great measure, as in previous cases, to the co-operation of the navy. Unfortunately Admiral Austen had died before the expedition could be undertaken.

General Bandula<sup>1</sup>, the late Commander of the Burmese army at Prome, surrendered himself on the morning of October 15. In a letter dated February 12, 1853, Lord Dalhousie observed, "If General Godwin, instead of leaving Prome on the 14th October, had remained there, attacked the enemy, and settled that country-side, at the same time setting General Steele in motion against the Burmese force below upon the Sitang, I should have made no complaint."

After the capture of Prome the question of sending the

<sup>1</sup> Son of the famous General who conducted the First Burmese War. Dr. Hall says that this "amiable but incompetent son of the great Bandula had surrendered in order to escape the punishment awaiting him at Amarapura." (*The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*, Introduction.)

British forces to Ava came into prominence again. At the beginning of the war Lord Dalhousie had been urged by the Home authorities as well as the British press to be cautious<sup>1</sup>. After the initial successes they "quickly veered round". The press, "conveniently forgetting its earlier counsels of moderation, began to shriek for a dictated peace at the capital itself." The Secret Committee in its despatch of September 6 directed that if the King of Ava did not formally conclude a treaty recognizing the annexation of Pegu, he should be asked to "be prepared for all consequences which he will bring upon himself by the further prosecution of war in his dominions." In his Minute dated November 3 Lord Dalhousie rightly interpreted this direction to mean that Ava was to be threatened in case the King refused to conclude a treaty. He discussed in detail the political, military and financial objections to this scheme.<sup>2</sup> He said that the Government of India could not "strike at the heart of the capital . . . Such a movement is simply impossible. The Government of India has not at its disposal the means of effecting it." The steam flotilla for carrying troops was limited in numbers, and its operations were still further limited by the nature of the waters in which it had to act.<sup>3</sup> "No man in his senses—certainly no prudent

<sup>1</sup> The *Times* in its leading article of the 3rd of February, 1852, wrote : "We shall gradually push on from Rangoon to Prome, and from Prome to Ava, good reason being never wanted for a fresh advance. Against these temptations we trust the firmness of the Imperial Government will be exerted to preserve us."

<sup>2</sup> The political objections will be dealt with in Chapter V.

<sup>3</sup> General Godwin referred to the Irrawaddy as "this noble, but most difficult to be navigated, river."

Government—would attempt to carry steam frigates 600 miles up a rocky, impetuous, and uncertain river, where so much may be risked by failure, so little obtained by complete success." Even if the risks were disregarded, the available flotilla could carry only 1500 men to Ava. "To rely upon this inconsiderable force for the conquest and occupation of Ava could not be gravely contemplated by the Government of India . . . while our experience of Cabul is as yet but ten years old, it would be rash indeed thus to expose a handful of men, isolated in the midst of enemies, who, however immeasurably inferior to them in the field, yet might, by their mere numbers, cut off their supplies, harass them at every point, and, by the aid of climate, hunger, and fatigue, produce again the calamity which we have once had occasion to deplore." The reasons which made it difficult to send an adequate force by land had been explained in the Minute of August 10. Although arrangements had been made for collecting 250 elephants, these were not sufficient for an advance to Ava. Local supplies of carriage could not be looked for; "for 100 miles above Prome the country is already deserted by the King's orders, and from that point onwards the inhabitants of the towns and villages are keeping their boats ready for flight on our appearance." Nor were the financial difficulties less serious. The financial strain caused by an advance upon Ava would compel the Directors to give up their plan for the conversion of a portion of the public debt and "to hear of exhausted cash balances and re-opened loans." After the conquest additional expenses would be necessary to

provide a large military force and the machinery for civil government. Under the circumstances Lord Dalhousie felt bound to reject the plan<sup>1</sup> suggested by the Secret Committee and to confine military operations within the province of Pegu. Two members of the Council accepted his views, but Sir John Litter wrote: "The difficulties attending the march of troops to the capital will doubtless be great, but by no means insuperable . . . The march beyond Prome

. . . will be similar to an advance into any other hostile country." In its despatch dated December 23 the Secret Committee generally approved Lord Dalhousie's views, although it noted "with satisfaction, by the minute of Sir John Litter, whose military experience entitles his opinion to great consideration, that he does not estimate the difficulties of an advance upon Ava as being of so grave a character as to present a material obstacle to the adoption of that course, if it should be rendered necessary by the persevering hostility of the Burmese."<sup>2</sup>

We have already referred to Lord Dalhousie's anxiety for the health of the troops and the elaborate arrangements made by him to give the soldiers and sailors as much comfort and security as possible. Unfortunately, there were critics

<sup>1</sup> On November 6 Lord Dalhousie wrote to a friend: "I demur, and don't mean to obey, unless they repeat peremptory orders. Don't suppose this is insubordination. I only delay and remonstrate against an act which is calculated to be most detrimental to the public interests. It is my duty to do this as much as it is to obey."

<sup>2</sup> On the Secret Committee's reference to Sir John Littler's Minute Sir William Lee-Warner comments as follows: ". . . self-love prompted a Parthian shot at the autocratic Marquis." (*Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, Vol. I, pp. 442-443.)

who alleged against the Government of India "neglect of every precaution for the health and comfort of the troops employed." The Government of India sent to the Court of Directors a large number of documents "in refutation of the allegations." It is not necessary for us to analyse these documents in detail. These included reports from the military Board and some other persons in authority (like General Godwin, Colonel Bogle, Dr. Montgomerie, Superintending Surgeon of the Burma Field Force, and Captain Simpson, Assistant Commissary-General) regarding the health and comfort of the troops in Burma. On the basis of these reports Lord Dalhousie claimed that "no force was ever more fully, more tenderly, or more successfully cared for; that there was no deficiency in the quantity of their provisions, and no inferiority, still less any unwholesomeness, in the quality of them; and, lastly, that, although there existed sickness and cholera, they did not prevail to an alarming extent, and were greatly less severe than might have been expected in the case of any force in the field at that season of the year."<sup>1</sup> The members of the Council came to the same conclusion.

We may now resume the story of military and naval operations. Henzada was an important depot and wooding station for the British steamers, and the protection of this town was essential to the navigation of the Irrawaddy. On November 1, 1852, some Burmese "dacoits" attacked the town, but they were compelled to retire after a "sharp fusillade."

Three weeks later Pegu was captured by the British forces

<sup>1</sup> Minute of November 18, 1852.

(November 21, 1852). When Pegu was handed over to the Talaings in June, they were unable to "hold it a week." After capturing the city the Burmese assembled there in large numbers and erected "strong defences on the river, and from it to the Pagoda, within the site of the old city; they became troublesome also to several villages between this and Rangoon". In November General Godwin found it necessary to capture Pagu: "As the army will shortly be at Prome, with a garrison only at Rangoon, it became imperative to take possession of, and garrison Pegu". So an expedition started on November 19 at day-break, and anchored two miles below Pegu on the evening of the next day. The troops were led by Brigadier McNeill, although General Godwin himself accompanied them. Commander Shadwell had charge of the flotilla. The town of Pegu "is situated about 60 miles from Rangoon, on a fine creek called the Pegu river, which runs into the Rangoon river, just below the town of Rangoon". The old city, "wherein the enemy was posted, is formed by a square surrounded by a high bund, each side of which is presumed to be about two miles in length, the west side facing the river; and the square is surrounded by a wet moat, between 70 and 80 paces wide. From the south-west angle there is a causeway over the moat, close to, and parallel with, the river. This causeway the enemy had made exceedingly strong by traverses, and breaking it down at various intervals to prevent our advance. On the whole of the south face of the bund, fronting our position, they had bodies of troops stationed, extending for about a mile and a quarter." As the causeway was "so narrow

that only a file of men could advance along it against their numerous musketry and local impediments," General Godwin decided to force his way "along the moat, and to turn the left of their position, on the south face of the square." The troops disembarked between 4 and half-past 6 a.m. on November 21. A storming party "crossed the moat through mud and water, and most gallantly stormed the enemy's post." Then an advance was made towards the large Pagoda, which was occupied at about one o'clock. "The enemy, by the least computation, could not number less than 5,000 men, evidently headed by people of consideration, by the numerous mounted people, as well as elephants, which were seen retiring by road to Sitang." The military force had 6 men killed and 31 wounded, including, among the latter, 3 officers; "none of the seamen . . . were either killed or wounded, although continually exposed to a warm fire." General Godwin thought that, "considering the difficultes of the ground, and exposure to the enemy," the loss was small.

General Godwin left a garrison in the Pagoda at Pegu and went to Rangoon. This garrison was more than once harassed by strong parties of the Burmese from Sitang and Shoeey-Gyne<sup>1</sup>. Early in December, 1852, the garrison was " beleaguered by a very large force of Burmese." "The strength of the enemy, added to their formidable position, the very small garrison, and its falling short of ammunition

<sup>1</sup> Typical examples of these Burmese raids will be found in Major Hill's letters to the Deputy Adjutant-General in Burma, November 28, and December 18, 1852.

.... caused" very great anxiety. General Godwin went to Pegu with 1200 men to relieve the garrison, and reached there on December 14. "Finding themselves between two fires," the Pagoda on the one side and General Godwin on the other, the Burmese retired; the General met only a large body of skirmishers. After this easy success he decided to advance into the interior of the country and to break up the Burmese ranks. The Burmese entrenched themselves in great numbers on a plain about four miles north of the Pagoda, at a place called Kaleetat. They were attacked by the British forces on December 17. From their "quiet and determined attitude behind their strong defences" and their numerical superiority General Godwin concluded that "they would stand our assault"; but "when the smoke cleared away after the impetuosity of the attack, it was like magic, their escaping us I believe the rapidity with which the advance closed upon them, threw them off all guard, and they considered flight their only safety." Then the British troops went to Sephangoon, a village at a distance of ten miles from Kaleetat, where the Burmese had retreated; but they found the village totally abandoned. The next day (December 18) General Godwin marched to Montsanganoo, another village at a distance of ten miles from Sephangoon. The Burmese retired when they found that an attack was imminent. On December 19 General Godwin returned to Pegu: "Had I had the means of carrying with me 12 days' provision, I would have pursued them over the Sitang river;

but I am sadly crippled everywhere for want of carriage, except at Rangoon, where I do not require it." He returned to Rangoon on December 22, "leaving a reinforcement with the garrison at Pegu, and strengthening their party of Sappers as a temporary measure, to allow of their putting themselves in a perfect state of defence."

Meanwhile several small expeditions had been despatched from Prome against the Burmese. Sir John Cheape, who commanded the Bengal Division, sent a party against the Burmese who were becoming "rather formidable" on the opposite side of the river just above Prome. This party destroyed two Burmese forts. On November 19 a British officer was killed while he was landing from a steamer off Akouktoung in order to patrol the coast. On November 22 a British party surprised a village named Guamyetna, which was "the head-quarters of the enemy." The village of Philloydan was occupied on November 26. Another village known as Podang Mew was captured on November 28. The occupation of this village was expected to "prevent the reassembly of the enemy, and open the resources of this part of the country" to the British. The officer who took these villages reported that the Burmese, "though offering no great resistance, appear always on the alert; and the pursuit of them has been attended with great exposure and fatigue to the troops under my command." On December 5, "Captain Loch having observed the enemy reconstructing the forts of Phoo-u-doung, opposite Prome, landed at daylight the next morning a party of 103 seamen . . . under a fire from the

Burmese . . . . and . . . . stormed the two forts in succession."

The principal military operations being over, it remained for the British forces in Burma to suppress numerous bands of marauders who terrorised the country under British occupation. This duty was effectively performed by Captain Phayre, Commissioner of Pegu. It is unnecessary for our present purpose to enter into the details of these operations. "The eventful year 1852 sank to its rest, as was fitting, with the boom of cannon announcing from the ramparts of Fort William that a new province was annexed to the dominions of the East India Company in trust for the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland."<sup>1</sup>

We have tried to reconstruct a very detailed account of the naval and military operations of the British forces in Burma from the official reports submitted by naval and military officers to their superiors. We have found that these reports are in no case contradicted by the journal of Laurie, who himself took part in the war. It may be claimed, therefore, that our sources are fairly exhaustive and accurate. Unfortunately, no reliable Burmese account of the war is accessible to us. We are compelled to survey the operations from the standpoint of one of the parties. As a result our survey remains one-sided and incomplete. Still it is not altogether impossible to draw from the British records a picture, however unsatisfactory, of the state of things behind the Burmese lines. Their stockades were strong; their

<sup>1</sup> Lee-Warner, *The Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, Vol. I, p. 445.

artillery was not negligible; they did not lack in personal courage. Still they fled at the sight of the invaders. They failed even to take advantage of the geographical and climatic conditions. Probably their fundamental weakness lay in bad leadership and lack of co-operation. The proud Governor of Rangoon did not venture, or like, to meet those whom he had provoked so . injudiciously. Bandula surrendered, probably to save himself from the fury of his King. What part the King himself played in the management of the war, we do not know; but we may suspect that the report that he was "cock-fighting, as usual," was not a mere wild guess. It was impossible for the average Burmese soldier to save his country from the folly of his rulers and the determined and organised pressure of his enemies.

## CHAPTER V

### ANNEXATION OF PEGU

The question of territorial expansion in Burma was naturally discussed by Lord Dalhousie on the eve of the war. On February 21, 1852, he wrote to a friend that if the Burmese hurried their Government into war, they would 'lose the maritime kingdom of Pegu, or perhaps the whole, white elephants included.' This isolated sentence in a private letter can hardly be taken as a definite statement of his policy, for officially he recorded the view "that conquest in Burma would be a calamity second only to the calamity of War." The progress of the war compelled him to adopt a different attitude. On June 27, 1852, he wrote in a private letter:

" . . . there is no symptom of submission, and I now give up all hope of it, except, perhaps, at a distant time, when our expenses will have risen to such a sum that the reimbursement we must demand will either be refused or can be met only by cession of territory—odious to them and undesired by us. Daily I am more mortified and disheartened by the political necessity which I see before me . . . Conquest, I have officially said, is a calamity; but in this case the avoidance of it would be a calamity greater still. If the Court choose to elect the alternative of immediate convenience at the price of certain future recurrence of the present evil in a worse form, they may do so."

In an exhaustive Minute, dated June 30, 1852, Lord Dalhousie explained the arguments which led him to

recommend the annexation of Pegu. He began by saying that "if overtures should be made before large additional charges have been incurred by the Government of India, in the preparation of an army to take the field in November, the Court of Ava should be required to pay down promptly 15 lacs of rupees, to cede the Negrais and Diamond Islands, and the district of Martaban," and added, "It is not anticipated by any one that overtures of peace will be made at present." Under the circumstances, five separate courses of action were open to the Government of India. It might "withdraw its armies from all Burmah; and exacting nothing, retaining nothing, it may trust entirely to the influence of this second manifestation of its power, for protecting its subjects and territories against Burmese violence in the future." Such a policy "would, in the eyes of Asia, be tantamount to a defeat," and the "Court of Ava would interpret, in its own way, a moderation which neither it, nor its neighbour nations, could comprehend, and would exult in the issues of the war, as in reality a homage to its power, which would be far from discouraging its tendency to outrage." Secondly, the army might be withdrawn after the annexation of the district of Martaban alone. In this case also moderation was liable to be "misunderstood and misrepresented, and no valid security would be afforded for future peace." Thirdly, Rangoon as well as Martaban might be retained. This would leave Bassein open to the Burmese as their new port and compel the Government of India to spend enormous sums for the defence of Rangoon, "for no territory . . . immediately

round Rangoon would afford a revenue sufficiently to pay for even a portion of the troops." Fourthly, Martaban, Bassein and Rangoon might be retained. In this case also the expenses for defence "would be very heavy, and no local income would be derived to meet the charge."

Finally, the entire province of Pegu, extending somewhat above Prome, might be annexed. Lord Dalhousie enumerated numerous advantages attendant upon the annexation of Pegu. In the first place, only the northern frontier of Pegu was weak, "for it presents no natural features in the formation of the country which would facilitate its defence, or save us from the worry of predatory attacks, even if invasion were not attempted by the Burmese." But this frontier could be defended if the European force at the disposal of the Government of India were increased by three regiments. On all other sides the province was bounded by natural barriers or British territories. Secondly, the climate of the province was excellent, its soil was fertile, and it contained valuable forests of teak. Thirdly, "the sea, with its trade, will be our own." Fourthly, the province was likely to yield from 20 to 25 *lakhs* per annum.<sup>1</sup>

"Besides these positive advantages, there are other circumstances . . . which . . . are not without their value." According to the Governor-General, "An occupation of Pegu would be a very different measure from the occupa-

<sup>1</sup> After the annexation of Pegu it was found that the province contained an area of 32,250 square miles and a population of 582,253 souls, and the annual revenue collections amounted to £157,150. (Lee-Warner, *The Life of The Marquis of Dalhousie*, Vol. II, p. 2.)

tion of a conquered province, as it usually occurs; for . . . . we shall have no hostile population to provide against." He expected that the people of Pegu would be glad to escape from "the cruel tyranny of the Burman rule" and "heartily rejoice in their liberation."<sup>1</sup> "While, therefore, in the Punjab and other acquisitions, the Government had carefully to provide as much against its new subjects as against any foreign enemy beyond; in Pegu the whole care of the army will be to guard the northern frontier from attack." Again, Lord Dalhousie thought that the annexation of Pegu was "rather to be regarded as a consolidation than as an extension of our territories," for the new province would unite "into one continuous tract" the British provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim. Finally, Upper Burma was "believed to be almost wholly dependent upon the trade and produce of Pegu"; so the annexation of Pegu and the control over the Irrawaddy would "enable us to command the supplies of Ava" and "give to our local position a coercive influence hardly inferior to the influence of our arms."<sup>2</sup>

So many strong arguments, marshalled with so much skill, could not be resisted. Sir Frederick Currie, a member of the Council, stated that "the annexation of the Province of Pegu is, for the reasons stated, inevitable." Mr. Lewis,

<sup>1</sup> On August 26, 1852, Lord Dalhousie wrote to a friend, "The question you ask, 'What will you do with the Peguites if you abandon their country?' is precisely the question that cannot be answered but in one way. And I think I see official pen-tops gently turning round to the point from which that answer sets."

<sup>2</sup> Similar arguments were repeated by Lord Dalhousie in his Minute dated November 3, 1852.

another member of the Council, expressed his "concurrence in the views set forth" by the Governor-General, and went a step further by demanding that "some assurance might be given to the Peguers and Taliens that they should not be again abandoned to the tender mercies of the Burmese." With this suggestion Lord Dalhousie and Sir Frederick Currie did not agree. Lord Dalhousie felt that such a declaration "would tend to fetter the authorities in England, in their determination regarding the policy they may desire to pursue in this case."

The Secret Committee accepted the Governor-General's recommendation and observed:<sup>1</sup>

"We concur with the Governor-General in his opinion, that extension of territory is not in itself desirable; and that the annexation, even of a province possessing so many advantages as Pegu, is to be looked upon rather in the light of a choice of evils, than a positive and unmixed good. But we think with him that, if the presumption and injustice of the Burmese Government compel us to take possession of Pegu, as being necessary to our security, the objections which may be urged against its acquisition may be counterbalanced by no inconsiderable advantages. And we entirely agree with the Governor-General in his estimate of the important bearing which the occupation of this fine province, with reference to its position, its climate, and its adaptation, in a commercial and maritime point of view, to the interests of this country,

<sup>1</sup> Despatch dated September 6, 1852.

may have upon the security and advancement of our Eastern Empire."<sup>1</sup>

At the same time the Committee put the Governor-General into trouble by insisting that Pegu should not be retained "without bringing the war to a conclusion, either by a treaty with the King of Ava, of which that cession should be the basis (*sine qua non*), or by the entire subjugation of that 'Power.'" This injunction was repeated in the despatch of the Committee dated October 7, 1852.

These instructions of the Secret Committee were exhaustively discussed by Lord Dalhousie in a Minute dated November 3, 1852. The Committee wanted either a treaty recognising the annexation of Pegu or "the entire subjugation" of the King of Ava. It was impossible to secure the latter without sending an expedition to Upper Burma, and there were serious military arguments<sup>2</sup> against the adoption of such a plan of campaign. Here we have to analyse Lord Dalhousie's view about the conclusion of a treaty. He regarded "a treaty with the Burman Power as an evil to be avoided", and added, "In truth the conclusion of such a treaty serves only to impose obligations upon the British Government in proportion as it confers rights . . . The British Government is thereby reduced to the necessity, either of interfering upon every occasion on which a faithless and overbearing Power disregards the stipulated rights of our

<sup>1</sup> On April 21, 1853, Lord Dalhousie wrote to a friend that the annexation of Pegu was "remunerative, and a manageable occupation."

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 130-132.

subjects, or of avoiding the perpetual risk of quarrel by overlooking such disregard of our subjects' rights and neglecting to enforce them." He went on: "The only consideration which would induce such a Power as Burmah to refrain from hostilities, and to save our subjects harmless, is fear of our power, and of the consequences, if they should provoke its exercise. If they have that fear, a treaty is superfluous for our protection; if they have it not, a treaty is worthless."<sup>1</sup> Lord Dalhousie believed that "the court of Ava would silently acquiesce in a loss, though it would not openly assent to a cession." Some months later, on April 21, 1853, Lord Dalhousie wrote to a friend, "I am quite aware that the annexation and occupation of Pegu without a treaty of peace is an anomalous policy in European eyes. I knew it would produce ridicule and outcry. But my duty is to do what is best for those I serve. My policy was an evil, but it was a less evil than the alternative. To stop at Prome, taking Pegu, and without a treaty, was better than going on to Ava, taking it, and still without a treaty."

In obedience to the instructions of the Secret Committee Lord Dalhousie promised to do his best to procure a treaty, but he proposed to "modify these orders as to abstain from attaching to the refusal, or neglect, of our offer of a Treaty, a menace so worded as that it must inevitably lead to the immediate advance of the army, and to the ultimate conquest

<sup>1</sup> Some months later, on June 19, 1853, Lord Dalhousie wrote to a friend, "Our only real security is our military power, and I will take care that that is maintained."

of Burmah." On November 16, 1852, Lord Dalhousie wrote a letter to the King of Burma, asking him to recognise the annexation of Pegu and to renew "the relations of friendship which formerly existed between the States." A draft of the treaty which the Governor-General wanted the Burmese Government to sign was enclosed. Article I provided for "perpetual peace and friendship" between the two States. Article II confirmed the cession of Pegu. Article III bound each Government to "permit the subjects of the other to carry on trade within their respective dominions." Captain Phayre had already been selected as Commissioner of Pegu, and he was "holding himself in readiness to proceed to Pegu at any moment." He was instructed to determine the boundary of the new province "with reference to joint considerations of a military and political character" and to report about measures necessary for the protection of the frontier. The district of Martaban was placed under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Tenasserim, but the "account of its revenue and expenses must be kept distinct from those of the present Tenasserim provinces, so as to enable the Government to see at any time the financial result of the annexation of Pegu."<sup>1</sup>

Captain Phayre arrived at Rangoon on December 19 and issued the Proclamation of annexation on the next day. The inhabitants of Pegu were asked "to submit themselves to the authority, and to confide securely in the protection, of the British Government, whose power they have seen to be

<sup>1</sup> Lord Dalhousie's Minute, December 9, 1852.

irresistible, and whose rule is marked by justice and beneficence." Captain Phayre believed that the Proclamation would "have a powerful effect in inducing the people of the Province of Pegu to combine, and resist the bands of marauders who have, for some time past, infested the country."<sup>1</sup>

The war was over, the province of Pegu was occupied, but the desired treaty was as far as ever. Meanwhile a palace revolution had overwhelmed the Court of Ava. "Pagan Min's half-brother, the Mindon Prince, a son of Tharrawaddy by an inferior wife, had throughout opposed the war. His pleasant character and the Burmese disasters in the war rendered him so popular that late in 1852 the King and his favourite, Maung Bwa, decided to rid themselves of him. Mindon, warned of his danger, fled the capital on the 17th of December 1852 with his younger brother, the Kanoung Prince. Adherents flocked to them, so that they were soon in open rebellion." Mindon's troops entered the capital and proclaimed him King in February, 1853. "From the moment of his accession he adopted a friendly attitude towards the British".

After issuing the Proclamation of annexation in Rangoon Captain Phayre went to Prome and tried to settle the boundary of the new province. Prome was very unhealthy and undesirable for troops or as a civil station. The territory lying

<sup>1</sup> For a short account of Captain Phayre's career, see Hall's *The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*, Introduction. For an account of the preliminary administrative arrangements of Pegu, see Lee-Warner, *The Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, Vol. II, pp. 1-23.

to the north of Prome was very rich in teak forests. "As the Proclamation gave no details of the boundary, about which there existed in people's minds the greatest vagueness, and as the Golden Feet still disdained to take any notice of the British, what therefore prevented an advance to a more suitable and healthy site for a cantonment and the inclusion of a rich belt of teak forest in British territory?" On April 3, 1853, Captain Phayre wrote to Lord Dalhousie, "I have proposed to carry our boundary to the end of the Meeaday jurisdiction, and also to the end of the Toungoo district. The General,<sup>1</sup> however, thought that this might make it so unpalatable to them,<sup>2</sup> as even to endanger the ratification of the treaty by the king. No doubt this might happen. As carrying the boundary far beyond Meeaday is of no advantage to us, as it gives us no rich country; as we could scarcely go far enough to get near the Aeng Pass; and as the hill country only would not afford us a road to that pass, or be of any great use for Police purposes, I finally adopted with the General the following line, namely: six English miles North from the Fort of Meeaday—The line to be run in that latitude West to the Arakan hills, and East to the Sitang River and Red Karen territory. This will secure to us all the best country, and the best of the Toung-ngoo forests."

Even before his accession to the throne Mindon had revealed his anxiety to come to terms with the British authorities. On January 27, 1853, two Italian missionaries

<sup>1</sup> General Godwin.

<sup>2</sup> Burmese envoys. See below, pp. 150-153.

named Father Domingo Tarolly and Father Paulo Abbona saw Captain Phayre at Meeaday and delivered a letter from Mindon, in which the Prince expressed his desire to continue friendly relations with "the English rulers in India." Captain Phayre, who thought that the Prince was "likely to succeed in his attempt on the throne," replied that the annexation of Pegu was "the result of a War forced by the Burmese Government upon the British." When Lord Dalhousie visited Burma in February, 1853, he felt "the chances in favour of the conclusion of a formal peace to be more satisfactory, than they have ever yet seemed to me to be." Towards the close of February or early in March Father Domingo Tarolly came to Captain Phayre at Rangoon "to announce that Burmese Commissioners would be sent and also to ascertain if the annexation of Pegu could not be recalled. The Priest was very anxious in the matter, to a degree which showed he was foolish enough to hope it might be effected." Captain Phayre told the priest that the Proclamation was "irrevocable."

On March 31, 1853, three Burmese officers arrived at Prome with a view to conclude a treaty. Before meeting them Captain Phayre had decided to ask them to accept the draft treaty prepared by the Government of India and to recognise the boundary arranged by the British authorities. The Burmese Envoys were not to be allowed the right of discussion. Captain Phayre knew that this method of concluding a treaty might appear 'uncourteous, even harsh.' But, he wrote to Lord Dalhousie, "if we once commence

discussion on the boundary, the conferences will be interminable, not to mention that discussion cannot possibly lead to any good end." Lord Dalhousie approved this procedure and remarked, "It is a great step gained that envoys of rank have come at all."

The Envoys were received by Captain Phayre with 'every mark of distinction.' They were obviously disappointed to find that the annexation of Pegu was really "irrevocable." They pathetically admitted that the Burmese were responsible for war, "that they had not a finger's point to urge in defence—all they asked for was generous consideration—that to deprive them of so much country was to leave them without an abode—that they asked for help—they were like children left without parents<sup>1</sup>—that the present King had always opposed the war and asked for consideration, and so on." When they found that their entreaties were of no avail, they opposed the boundary laid down in the treaty on the ground that it was not in accordance with the Proclamation of annexation. They were right—General Godwin and Commodore Lambert agreed with them—but they knew that they were helpless. Captain Phayre gave them a letter from the Governor-General to King Mindon, in which Lord Dalhousie bluntly told the King that renewal of war would 'end in the entire subjection of the Burman power and in the ruin and exile of yourself and your race'. The King was allowed one month's time to accept the treaty.

<sup>1</sup> Captain Phayre wrote to Lord Dalhousie, "A Burmese Woongyre, imploring for help and consideration in the earnest manner this man did, is something quite new in the history of the nation."

When these proceedings were reported to Lord Dalhousie, he censured General Godwin and Commodore Lambert for encouraging the Burmese Envoys. At the same time he authorised Captain Phayre to accept the boundary laid down in the Proclamation. He wrote, “ . . . public opinion is adverse to the war and would strongly, and I think justly, condemn this Government, if it lost a treaty merely for the difference between Meéáday and Prome.”

On April 14, 1853, Father Paulo Abbona again came to see Captain Phayre at Prome and told him that King Mindon expected the Government of India to abide by the Proclamation. The King, he said, “would not sign away the extra territory.” Captain Phayre was inclined to attribute the Father’s hasty visit to a report that one of King Mindon’s uncles<sup>1</sup> had fled to the Shan States, ‘discontented with the present state of affairs’. This sudden danger was ‘very likely to make the Burmese wish to conclude a treaty of peace at any cost.’ A few days later the priest was ‘almost reconciled to the boundary as laid down’ in the treaty; but Captain Phayre suspected that the Kanoung Prince entertained hostile intentions.

Captain Phayre’s last meetings with the Burmese Envoys were held on May 9 and 10, 1853. They ‘refused to sign away territory’, on the ground that they were authorised only to offer the expenses of the war. Thereupon Captain Phayre broke off the negotiations, delivering to them a memorandum

<sup>1</sup> He was the Commander-in-Chief of the army at the early stage of the war.

stating that the frontier of the British territory was fixed at six miles north of Meeaday. On May 11 the Commissioner wrote to the Governor-General, "I believe the King, having just come to the throne after a revolution, is afraid to incur the odium of signing away the Lower Provinces of his kingdom.<sup>1</sup> He may, however, silently acquiesce in our occupation and be ready to enter into a commercial treaty."

This prophecy was a good one. After their return to Amarapura the Burmese Envoys reported their proceedings to the King, who once more emphasized his desire for peace. Orders were issued to Burmese frontier officials not to allow any attacks to be made on the British forces at Meeaday and Toungoo. English prisoners were liberated and foreign merchants allowed to leave the country, if they so desired. Lord Dalhousie observed, "I accept the King's declaration, of course ; for it is, to my mind, as good as any Treaty. I have to add that I place no confidence in either the one or the other ; and regard our only security to be an adequate military strength in Pegu". In response to the King's request the Irrawaddy was opened to traders from Upper Burma, but due precautions were taken to see that their boats did not bring down large numbers of armed men. The Expeditionary Force was dissolved, and General Godwin was

<sup>1</sup> In a Minute dated March 29, 1854, Lord Dalhousie observed, "It is well known that the King has said that he could not venture in the face of the people over whom he has very lately begun to rule to affix his signature to such a cession." Similar views were expressed in a private letter. (Baird, *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, pp. 258-259.)

recalled to resume his command in the Bengal Presidency ; but two divisions of the army remained in Burma, one under the command of Brigadier-General Sir John Cheape at Prome, the other divided among several different stations under the command of Brigadier-General Sir Scudamore Winde Steel.

Although *de facto* peace was restored, suspicions did not disappear. At Amarapura there was a violent anti-British party, led by an Armenian and supported by the Kanoung Prince, the King's brother and Heir-Apparent, which was kept in check only by the King's moderation and good sense. There were excitable tempers on the British side too. "The Rangoon and Calcutta press warned Government of Burmese preparations to invade Pegu, and asserted that the Court of Ava was giving secret encouragement to dacoit leaders whose hydra-headed persistency so severely handicapped the British in their efforts to settle the administration of the country. Even Captain Latter,<sup>1</sup> the Deputy Commissioner of Prome,

so far lost his head as to give credence to the stories of Burmese hostile preparations that he received from his extremely untrustworthy spies". But Captain Phayre did not lose his head. In June, 1853, he received a report to the effect that "preparations were making for war, that the Heir-Apparent had been invested with, or had assumed, the whole powers of Government, and had issued orders for the gathering of a large force, that all the inhabitants of the country

<sup>1</sup> Lord Dalhousie seriously doubted 'whether Captain Latter should be permitted to remain in a frontier charge at all.'

from Meeaday up to the Capital had left the river bank". His cool conclusion was that these preparations 'were rather made to meet the expected advance of a British force on the capital than for the purpose of invading British territory' Later investigations proved the accuracy of this conclusion.

Lord Dalhousie decided that he should go to Burma personally in order to investigate matters for himself on the spot: Accordingly he left Calcutta on December 9, 1853, and returned on January 17, 1854. "Into the intervening space of time he crammed a surprising amount of activity".<sup>1</sup> Captain Phayre had already suggested the desirability of employing a confidential agent at Amarapura, whose reports 'would be invaluable in providing an antidote to the absurd and dangerous rumours that flowed in with such amazing persistence'. A reliable man was available—a British merchant named Thomas Spears,<sup>2</sup> who had spent many years in Burma. Lord Dalhousie at first hesitated, but he accepted Captain Phayre's plan after a thorough discussion with him at Rangoon. In a Minute dated January 5, 1854, he observed, "I think it would be of great public advantage that his services should be obtained as correspondent. Mr. Spears of course must be made to understand that he has no official character whatever, and must not assume any at Ameera-poora directly or indirectly. He should not attempt to conceal that he corresponds with the Commissioner, but no inference,

<sup>1</sup> For details, see Lee-Warner, *Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, Vol. II, pp. 18-22, and Hall, *The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*, pp. 417-420.

<sup>2</sup> For details about Spears, see Hall, *The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*, Introduction.

drawn from that fact, of his being invested with an official character, should be admitted".

Spears assumed his duties late in December, 1853, and went to Europe late in 1861 or early in 1862. During these years he served as an 'unofficial' agent<sup>1</sup> of the British Government at the Court of the Burmese King. His letters were sent to Calcutta for the information of the Governor-General. Lord Dalhousie observed, "These letters cannot be considered official ; nevertheless they have all the importance of official letters, not only from the intelligence and good judgment exhibited by the writer, but because portions of the series were declaredly written at the instance of the King himself". Spears was a very tactful and intelligent agent. Dr. Hall rightly says, " so long as Spears remained at the Burmese capital practically all the intercourse between the British authorities and the Court of Ava passed, unofficially, but no less really, through his hands, to the benefit of both sides.<sup>2</sup> He paved the way for the re-establishment of the British Residency at Mandalay . . . . in 1862".

The reports sent by Spears to Captain Phayre convinced Lord Dalhousie that there was, 'humanly speaking, no chance whatever of the renewal of war'. The King was friendly.

<sup>1</sup> In September, 1854, the Commissioner of Pegu was asked by the Government of India to inform the Burmese Government "in the most explicit manner that Mr. Spears is not an officer of the British Government, that he has no authority from it, and that nothing said or written by him has any official character whatever." But Mr. Spears received a salary from the British Government and King Mindon knew it.

<sup>2</sup> Some letters written by Spears to Captain Phayre are printed in Hall, *The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*.

No opposition was to be offered by the Burmese Government to British officers drawing the boundary line between Pegu and Burmese territory. King Mindon was willing to 'withdraw all his troops from the boundary, leaving only a few hundred men as guard'. He requested Captain Phayre to communicate with the capital if local officers created troubles on the frontier. He was ready to supply grain or any other commodity which might be required by the British authorities for the use of their troops in Pegu.<sup>1</sup> The only concession which he wanted was that the British would not include within their new boundary the town of Mindon, which had been his appanage before his accession to the throne. He told Mr. Spears that, if this town was taken from him, his people would regard it as a personal insult offered to their King. Lord Dalhousie wanted to conciliate the King by surrendering this town,<sup>2</sup> which had no special military or economic value, and to seize this opportunity for securing a treaty. A treaty, he remarked, was desired by the authorities in England, and was likely to have 'a quieting and reassuring effect even in this country'; but he personally

<sup>1</sup> Lord Dalhousie wanted the Commissioner of Pegu to purchase corn from the King. His purpose was two-fold. In the first place, the amount of corn purchased would give the King some idea about the number of troops stationed in Pegu. Secondly, as corn trade was a royal monopoly, the profit would go to him and he would lose it if he renewed hostilities. Captain Phayre was instructed to buy corn from the King, 'even though a higher price than the ordinary rate should be asked for it.'

<sup>2</sup> And also by presenting him a steamer, which he very much wanted to possess.

regarded it as 'wholly worthless as a real guarantee for permanent peace'.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Dalhousie was aware that the treaty which the King was asked to sign in 1853 contained certain features which were very objectionable from the Burmese point of view. So he was prepared to modify it so 'as to render it in all probability less unacceptable to the King'. A revised draft was sent to Captain Phayre. It contained four articles. Article 1 provided for 'perpetual peace and friendship'. Article 2 provided for the recognition by the King of Burma of the annexation of Pegu by the East India Company.<sup>2</sup> The third article provided for unrestricted commercial intercourse. Article 4 provided for ratification. Captain Phayre was vested with full powers for the conclusion of the revised treaty.

Towards the close of August, 1854, Major Phayre received a letter from the Burmese Government announcing that an Envoy from the King would soon start for Calcutta. The letter contained some objectionable expressions regarding the official status of the Governor-General and the Commissioner of Pegu,<sup>3</sup> against which Major Phayre protested in his reply.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Dalhousie's Minute, March 29, 1854.

<sup>2</sup> The Company and the King "hereby engage that they will at all time preserve inviolate the boundary which separates the British territories from the territories of the King of Ava."

Lord Dalhousie expected that the King 'may acquiesce in the cession upon paper, as he has already acquiesced in it in substance.'

<sup>3</sup> "The letter bears an address to the Commissioner which is discourteous and disrespectful in its form. Moreover, the letter describes the presents of the King to the Governor-General in arrogant language; and it alludes to presents which are expected from the Governor-General in

The letter itself was returned to the Burmese authorities. Lord Dalhousie approved the action of the Commissioner, and directed him not to receive the Burmese Envoy unless the Burmese Government made 'full reparation for its late most offensive act by substituting another letter couched in proper terms'. The Burmese Ministers were to be distinctly informed : "The Governor-General of India in Council, as the representative of the Sovereign of England, acknowledges no superior among the Kings and Rulers by whom he is surrounded. He holds intercourse with none unless upon terms of entire equality, and he will receive no communication from any which, by addressing him as though he were inferior in dignity, exhibits disrespect towards the Sovereign he represents".<sup>1</sup> The Governor-General also took exception to two statements contained in the Burmese letter. It was also alleged that the proposal of exchanging presents between the King and the Governor-General originated with Mr. Spears. This statement, Lord Dalhousie pointed out, was inaccurate.

Before these instructions reached Major Phayre, he received another letter from the Burmese Ministers, announcing that the Embassy appointed by the King would leave Amarapura on September 20. As this letter also contained objectionable expressions, the Commissioner returned it with protest. An explanatory letter received a few days later

return, in those peculiar terms which describe the offerings which are usually made according to Burman custom by an inferior to a superior."

<sup>1</sup> Lord Dalhousie's Minute, September 12, 1854.

proved partially satisfactory. Major Phayre thereupon communicated to the Burmese Court the sentiments of the Government of India and requested it to send a new letter couched in the proper style if it still desired to send an Embassy to Bengal. A Burmese Envoy with some colleagues arrived at Rangoon on October 5. Major Phayre gave them a suitable reception, but no formal or public interview was granted, as they had not brought with them any formal letter couched in the proper style. The situation was explained to the Envoy by the Commissioner in a private interview, and, fortunately, all the members of the Embassy were found 'exceedingly friendly'. The required letter was at last received at Rangoon in November and Major Phayre at once gave a public reception to the Envoy and his colleagues. They left Rangoon on November 22 and arrived in Calcutta on November 28. Elaborate arrangements were made for their reception.

Lord Dalhousie received the Burmese Envoy and his colleagues on December 11. Major Phayre was present on the occasion and took a prominent part in the negotiations which followed the ceremonial visits. The Envoys requested permission to purchase 1,000 flint muskets. To this request Lord Dalhousie agreed, "as the number is not considerable and as consent to their request will show at once a consciousness of security and a desire to meet the wishes of the King". He personally drafted a friendly letter to the King, in which no reference was made to the demand for a treaty. That demand, he believed, might be more conveniently put forward

by British Envoys 'who may hereafter be deputed to the Court of Ava'. This conciliatory tone could not be maintained throughout the negotiations. The Burmese Envoys had an interview with the Governor-General on December 23, 1854. Major Phayre acted as the interpreter. The Envoys said, "It is the custom of all Governments that on the return of peace, things should be restored to the position they were in before the commencement of war. We represent, therefore, that the villages and lands which have been occupied by the British Government may now be restored to His Majesty the King of Ava".<sup>1</sup> Lord Dalhousie replied, "So long as the Sun shines . . . those territories will never be restored to the Kingdom of Ava."<sup>2</sup> He was prepared to withdraw some of the British troops from the Pegu frontier, as the King of Burma had already withdrawn his troops from that region. He concluded by expressing the hope that the King would agree to enter into a 'treaty of friendship with the British Government.' The disappointed Envoys took their departure a few days later.

<sup>1</sup> Phayre wrote to Lord Dalhousie later on that the Envoys 'certainly had no orders to make the demand they did.' (Hall, *The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*, Letter No. 177.)

<sup>2</sup> It was certainly a very strong and tactless statement. In his *Journal* describing the Mission to Amarapura (1855) Major Phayre remarked, "there is no doubt the King felt humiliated at the decided tone used on that occasion." But the King was kept in the dark about the true character of Lord Dalhousie's 'decided tone.' His Envoy merely told him that the Governor-General said 'that it would not be proper to give back territory.' He dared not repeat the Governor-General's words before the King. (Hall, *The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*, Letter No. 177.)

Towards the middle of the year 1855 Lord Dalhousie decided to send to Amarapura 'a return mission of a friendly nature'. Major Phayre was selected as 'sole envoy', for the Governor-General felt that the duty 'could not be entrusted to better hands'. He was to be accompanied by a staff 'not too numerous and well selected'. Only such officers were to be chosen for this purpose "as shall be capable in various ways of collecting and furnishing information to the Government upon all points on which it may be of advantage hereafter to possess accurate knowledge and which may be useful also for our present purposes". A Surgeon was to be sent for 'obtaining useful information . . . . regarding the climate, the sanitary character and the natural productions of the country'. A military officer was to be entrusted with the task of noticing 'all military questions connected with Burma and the route to the capital'. A naval officer was to gather 'full and accurate knowledge of the river Irrawaddy' above the British frontier. Finally, an artist was to be attached to the Mission. "His pencil", observed the cautious Governor-General, "by supplying us with sketches of the river . . . . and of the country . . . . would convey to the Government a better idea of the natural features of . . . . Burma than any written report, however able and lucid, could supply."

All arrangements were completed without unnecessary delay. Lord Dalhousie did not like to 'prescribe the precise course' which was to be followed by the Mission on its arrival at Amarapura, but he restricted Major Phayre's discretion by the order that "in the ceremonies of reception no mark

ot deference to the King should be conceded, which have not been conceded by the envoys" who preceded him. If the Burmese Court persisted in improper demands with regard to ceremony and refused to forego them even after official protest couched in 'temperate but firm language', the Envoy was authorised to leave Amarapura and return to Pegu. After the satisfactory adjustment of all points of ceremony the Envoy was to deliver the Governor-General's letter to the King and to offer presents to the King, the Queen and the Heir-Apparent. He, as well as other members of the Mission, were to create a favourable atmosphere 'by manifesting the utmost respect for the King and his family and a frank and conciliatory demeanour towards all with whom they may be brought in contact'. The ultimate object of the Envoy was to 'induce the King to enter into definite relations with us, by means of the formal treaty which the Home Authorities have from the first desired to conclude'.<sup>1</sup>

The terms of the treaty which Major Phayre was instructed to secure were different from those offered to King Mindon in 1854. Lord Dalhousie was no longer prepared to give up the district of Mindon, for the King had not returned any definite reply to his former proposal.<sup>2</sup> Nor was he anxious to secure the King's formal consent to the annexation of Pegu. He wrote, ". . . it is clear that we may now safely and

<sup>1</sup> Lord Dalhousie's Minute, July 3, 1855.

<sup>2</sup> The Governor-General added that this district could not be returned without 'committing an injustice' towards its inhabitants 'who have shewn themselves to be among the quietest and best disposed of our people in Pegu.'

in good policy abstain from all endeavours to obtain an article in the treaty, which shall either directly make or indirectly recognize a cession by the King of the Province of Pegu". Major Phayre was, therefore, asked 'to conclude a simple treaty of amity, adding to it, if the King should be willing to do so, an article conferring on the subjects of each nation the right to trade without impediment within the territories of the other'.<sup>1</sup> A draft treaty was enclosed with these instructions. It consisted of two articles. The first article was identical with the first article of the treaty of Yandabo, 'excepting only that it is made binding on the heirs and successors of the King of Ava as well as on himself and thus prevents any future recourse being had to the pretexts by which King Tharrawaddy endeavoured to repudiate the former treaty.' The second article was 'taken in its general tenor from the first article of the Commercial Treaty with Ava concluded in 1826'. Lord Dalhousie observed, "Both articles are on purpose couched in the most general language, for the Government of India has long since expressed its conviction that, if a treaty be concluded with the Court of Ava, it should contain as few stipulations as possible, since every fresh point of contact with such a power as the Burmese involves a fresh risk of conflict, and every assertion of right imposes upon us the obligation of enforcing it under all circumstances".<sup>2</sup>

Personally, Lord Dalhousie did not attach much value to

<sup>1</sup> Lord Dalhousie's Minute, July 3, 1855.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Dalhousie's Minute, July 3, 1855.

such a treaty. He felt that it would not furnish any real additional guarantee for the preservation of peace or for the security of trade. But he had to satisfy the Home authorities.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, a treaty was calculated to place British relations with Burma on a settled and recognized basis in the sight of other nations. Under these circumstances Lord Dalhousie was not prepared to make any concession to the Burmese ; he would rather forego the demand for a treaty. He would not restore the district of Mindon, nor would he try to conciliate the Burmese by abolishing the inland frontier dues. Major Phayre was directed merely to tell the King that his refusal to conclude a treaty would be misinterpreted in some quarters as an evidence of hostile intentions and serve as an obstacle to commerce. Unless a treaty of amity was concluded, the Government of India would not permit the passage of sulphur, warlike stores and similar articles through its dominions into Burma nor would it allow the officers of the Burmese King to bring royal gifts to the pagodas in Pegu. Lord Dalhousie knew how difficult it would be for Major Phayre to secure a treaty under these circumstances. So he remarked in explicit terms,<sup>2</sup> . . . no blame will be imputable to the Envoy if he should not succeed in removing the King's objections, nor will the Mission be considered by the Government to have failed in its objects, if it should not bring back

<sup>1</sup> The authorities in London were so anxious to have a treaty that Captain Phayre's failure to secure it excluded his name from the Honours List of 1856. (Lee-Warner, *The Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, Vol. II, p. 397.)

a treaty with it, for the primary and main object of the Mission is . . . . to confirm the peace which actually exists between the British Government and the Court of Ava".<sup>1</sup>

Major Phayre arrived near Amarapura towards the close of August, 1855. Throughout his journey from Rangoon "everything indicated a desire on the part of the King to receive us with distinction and with hospitality and to reciprocate the attention shown to his own Envoy in Calcutta." A beautiful residence was provided for the Envoy at a distance of about a mile from the city. "It is evident", Major Phayre reported, "nothing has been spared to make us comfortable according to the best of their judgment"

Prolonged negotiations were found necessary in order to settle petty details about the ceremonial reception of the Embassy. At last Major Phayre was formally received by the King on September 13. A few days later he had a long interview with the King. Although his manner was friendly, yet "his unwillingness to enter into a formal treaty was made very plain in his references to that subject." Major Phayre thought that rumours regarding Lord Dalhousie's departure from India and the appointment of Lord Canning had "inspired the Burmese Court with vague hopes that something may turn up from these changes favourable to its cherished desire for the recovery of what has been lost". The King had consequently become 'more averse than ever to enter into a written engagement'. He was trying to send an Envoy to

<sup>1</sup> Lord Dalhousie's Minute, July 3, 1855.

France in order to enlist the French Emperor's sympathy and to seek for his intervention for the restoration of Pegu.

Major Phayre's stay at Amarapura was protracted on different excuses. On one occasion the King informed him through Mr. Spears that if the new Governor-General on his arrival in India refused to change Lord Dalhousie's policy about the restoration of Pegu, he would accept the proposed treaty. The Ministers indulged in vague statements and tried to open the question of Pegu. On October 16 they definitely refused to accept the treaty, on the ground that it was contrary to Burmese custom to enter into treaty obligations. In the final interview the King spoke in a 'most friendly spirit' and tried to impress on Major Phayre his sincere desire for the continuance of peace and amity.

Even a cursory glance through Major Phayre's *Journal* makes it clear that he left no stone unturned in order to secure a treaty. He was perfectly justified in claiming that his failure was not due to 'any want of zeal or good management' on his part, but rather to 'the personal prejudice of the King' which at that moment was 'unconquerable'. He was not prepared to compromise himself in the eyes of the Burmese Chroniclers. He felt that his name would be dishonoured if it was connected with the surrender of territory 'even tacitly'. Moreover, he hoped that many chances might arise to render a treaty avoidable. The Armenians told him that the Czar of Russia would soon send his invincible army<sup>1</sup> to

<sup>1</sup> The King took great interest in, and collected detailed information about, the Crimean War.

conquer India. Exaggerated reports about the Santal insurrection<sup>1</sup> were circulated all over Burma. It was fondly believed that the Emperor of France would influence the Queen of England in favour of the Burmese.<sup>2</sup> Finally, some articles in the London newspapers were interpreted as showing that the demand for the restoration of Pegu was likely to meet with a more favourable hearing in England than in India.

Though King Mindon indulged in illusions, he was not a fool. Major Phayre says, "The King is undoubtedly an extraordinary man for a Burman. For the first time since the present dynasty succeeded to the throne in 1752, perhaps in their whole history, the sovereign of Burma is mild in temper, easy of access, hears everything himself, is heartily desirous that his subjects shall not be oppressed, and strives to secure their happiness. There can be no doubt of his personal popularity. The people speak in terms of admiration of his good qualities, and openly say they never had a King so just and so beneficent. . . . He is too sagacious to suppose he can stand against us, and as long as he lasts no doubt peace will be preserved. Still he does not cease to hanker after the province he has lost and to listen eagerly to reports which

<sup>1</sup> See K. K. Datta, *The Santal Insurrection*.

<sup>2</sup> Mindon was encouraged to send an Embassy to France by a Frenchman named D'Orgoni. An Embassy actually visited Paris towards the close of the year 1856. On the occasion of the reception of the Embassy by the French Emperor, D'Orgoni 'was present only in the character of interpreter or explainer.' Napoleon III's reply to King Mindon's letter was 'as short as possible and simply complimentary'; it contained no reference to the Burmese King's request for a commercial treaty.

hold out a chance, however vague or distant, of his being able one day to recover it by some unimagined disaster to British power”<sup>1</sup>

In an elaborate Minute dated December 13, 1855, Lord Dalhousie recorded his remarks about the proceedings of the Embassy. He was ‘entirely satisfied’ that the Mission had been ‘conducted with ability, firmness and dignity’. He was convinced that Major Phayre’s failure to secure a treaty was due entirely to the ‘rooted prejudice of the King himself’. The primary object of the Mission—the confirmation of the amicable relations which in practice were already growing up between the British and Burmese Governments—had been fully realised. The Governor-General recorded his ‘firm conviction’ that peace with Burma was ‘to the full as secure as any written treaty could have made it’. At the same time he ordered that ‘a rigid prohibition of the export of arms, gunpowder and sulphur’ should be enforced on the Pegu and Arakan frontiers.

<sup>1</sup> As an instance of the King’s good sense Major Phayre refers to an amusing reform introduced by him. It was the custom of the Burmese Government from time immemorial to defray the expenses of provisions supplied to foreign Envoys by levies of money from the outcastes of society, the lepers and the ‘dead body burners.’ This custom was intended to point out to the Burmese ‘the superiority of their King and race over all others in the world.’ King Mindon abolished it

## CHAPTER VI

### COMMERCIAL TREATIES OF 1862 AND 1867, AND TRADE WITH YUNAN

We have already quoted Major Phayre's statement that King Mindon 'listened eagerly to reports which held out a chance, however vague or distant, of his being able one day to recover his lost territory by some unimagined disaster to British power'. The outbreak of the Mutiny naturally created suspicions in the mind of British officers in Burma. In October, 1857, the Government of India received a report to the effect that attempts were likely to be made during the cold season for the recovery of Pegu. The Commissioner of Pegu received the following instructions :

"Should any aggression be made upon our frontier by such a force or in such a manner as to show connivance on the part of the Burmese authorities, you are authorised to warn the King of Ava that he will be held responsible for the acts of his subjects, and that it is from himself that satisfaction will be exacted." King Mindon was, however, wise enough not to play with fire.

Under the directions of the Governor-General-in-Council Mr. R. Temple and Lt.-Colonel H. Bruce visited British Burma in November-December, 1860, for the purpose of conferring with Colonel Phayre upon administrative problems. The Commissioner was asked by the Government of India "to hold free and unreserved intercourse with these two

officers, bearing in mind that they are not sent to Pegu with authority to introduce any changes, or with any commission to convey to you instructions from the Governor-General-in-Council, but simply with the view to their affording you the benefit of their experience in framing any suggestions which you may desire to make, and also for the purpose of themselves obtaining, through you, any information they may desire regarding the system of administration in Pegu, and the establishment required and employed in carrying it out."

Mr. Temple and Colonel Bruce visited Rangoon, Moulmein, Thayet-myo and Akyab, and submitted their report on December 15, 1860. The report was accompanied by numerous memoranda on the Civil, Military, Marine, and Public Works establishments in British Burma. They anticipated that "the united provinces of British Burmah would pay their own expenses", but added, "it is certain that constant economy will be needed in order to equalise income and expenditure" The following estimate was the basis of their conclusion:

	Annual income.	Annual expenditure.
Pegu	Rs. 50,00,000	Rs. 58,54,000
Tenasserim	„ 16,50,000	„ 12,88,000
Arakan	„ 14,50,000	„ 5,00,500
Total	<hr/> Rs. 81,00,000 <hr/>	<hr/> Rs. 76,42,500 <hr/>

With regard to revenue matters, Mr. Temple and Colonel Bruce suggested that "the revision of assessment, according to the actual capabilities of soil and advantages of locality", already begun in the Rangoon district, should be extended to other districts. They expected that "in many cases a good revision would, while it benefited the tax-payers, raise the aggregate revenue". Other measures suggested for the enhancement of the revenue included increase of the salt tax in Pegu, introduction of the tobacco licence into Pegu, and abolition of the prohibition of the export of opium into the Burmese King's territories.

Mr. Temple and Colonel Bruce also referred to 'the question of maintaining or removing the British customs line on the Ava<sup>1</sup> frontier, near Thayet-myo'. The line brought a revenue on the average between three and four *lakhs* (with prospect of increase to five), but, 'in a politico-economical view' the line was 'open to objection'. They observed, "It must more or less interfere with the commerce between the north and south of Burma and the traffic of the valley of Irrawaddy, which commerce and traffic the Pegu authorities are so justly anxious to foster." The policy of maintaining the customs line was, moreover, 'inconsistent with the general British policy that has abolished all transit duties'. The trade of the Irrawaddy Valley being 'the life-blood' of Burma, its 'entire freedom is a matter of consequence, provided that

<sup>1</sup> Ava was no longer the capital of Burma. Even Amarapura had been abandoned. King Mindon transferred his capital to Mandalay in 1857.

# CAPITALS OF BURMA UNDER THE ALUNGPAYA DYNASTY

ASSAN HILLS

SHWEBO

SAGAING

Ancient  
Burmese Capital

Irrawaddy River

N. Shan States

MANDALAY

= Former  
Burmese Capital

AMARAPURA

Former  
B. Capital

AVA

Ancient  
Burmese Capital

Road to  
Rangoon

Amil

R. Myitnge

R. Myitnge



the present sacrifice of a part of the customs revenue could be conceded'.

The prospects of British trade in Burma naturally invited the careful consideration of these agents of the Government of 'India. They observed, "as yet no English merchants have established business at Ava; but it appears probable, that if the King of Ava had acceded to the treaty that some time ago was proposed to his Majesty by the British Government, there would, ere this, have arisen an English trade at Ava. It is certain that the Burmese are largely inclined to take British piece goods, and that, if only a treaty had existed, British enterprise would transport quantities of such goods to Ava". With reference to the employment of European capital in British Burma, Mr. Temple and Colonel Bruce added that "the want of a more complete law respecting the relations between employer and labourer is frequently mentioned; in places where labourers have to be hired and brought from distant districts at great expense, this matter becomes one of consequence".

Another obstacle to the extension of British trade to Burma was the system of royal monopoly. The Government of India reported to the Secretary of State on March 7, 1879, "Before the conclusion of the treaty of 1867 the Burmese Government used from time to time arbitrarily to set apart any article of commerce, and to declare the trade in it, within Upper Burmah, to be a royal monopoly. The effect of the declaration was to deter the private trader from purchasing direct from the producer any of the reserved articles. He

was compelled to buy from the Government agents, to whom the producers were obliged to sell their goods at a fixed price". Under this system private traders were practically shut out, or were liable at any time to be shut out, from the extensive market of Upper Burma.

These commercial questions naturally engaged the attention of Colonel Phayre, and in April, 1862, he submitted to the Government of India an elaborate memorandum containing his suggestions. He proposed that he should be allowed to visit Mandalay 'to negotiate arrangements either by treaty or otherwise' regarding three pressing problems: the abolition or regulation of frontier customs; the opening of trade between Pegu and Yunan *via* Bhamo; and the immigration of Chinese labourers into British territory through Burma. He recommended the abolition of frontier customs apart altogether from the consideration of any return to be made by the Burmese', because the pressure of taxation in Pegu was very heavy. From the financial point of view this sacrifice was not likely to create any difficulty, for the revenues of Pegu from other sources were steadily improving.

The Government of India authorised Colonel Phayre to open negotiations. He was required to secure five concessions:

(1) The Burmese Government would not increase the duties levied on English goods imported into or exported from Upper Burma.

(2) The caravan route to Yunan *via* Bhamo was to be

re-opened by means of a joint British and Burmese Mission to the frontier.

(3) British merchants were to be allowed' to go by that route, or to send their agents, and to place agents, European or Asiatic, at Bhamo, in order to attend to their trade.

(4) Chinese traders and labourers from Yunan were to be allowed to pass into British territory without hindrance. This stipulation should, if possible, be made to apply to routes leading towards Assam as well as to those which took the direction to Pegu.

(5) Opium was to be allowed to pass from British territories through Burma into Yunan either duty free or on payment of a moderate transit duty.

In return, the Governmet of India agreed to grant the following concessions to the Burmese Government :

(1) The sea-board duties on goods imported into Rangoon for export to Burmese territory were to be reduced.

(2) The land and river duties imposed on the English side of the frontier were to be abolished.

(3) Permission would be granted to the Burmese Government to import arms and warlike stores by the Irrawaddy, "if Colonel Phayre was of opinion that it could be done with safety and the Burmese Government could not otherwise be induced to agree to the stipulations proposed".

With these instructions Colonel Phayre left Rangoon on September 16 and reached Mandalay on October 8. As he approached the capital he was informed by the King, through a Portuguese named M. Camaratta, that the Chief Commis-

sioner should not speak to any of the Ministers regarding the object of his visit ; anything he had to propose was to be communicated to the King in writing through M. Camaratta. In the negotiations which followed Colonel Phayre was assisted by Bishop Bigandet, a Frenchman and Chief of the Catholic Mission in Burma. Colonel Phayre wrote, “ it is really doubtful whether, had it not been for his assistance, the King would have ventured to order the treaty to be signed against the opposition which . . . existed on the part of the Heir-Apparent or Crown Prince. . . . The Crown Prince is an ardent advocate for drawing closer to France, as a counterpoise to British influence ; and the fact of a French Bishop supporting a treaty with the British . . . was the main cause of the King being persuaded to act contrary to his brother’s views. Even a King of Burma, despotic though he be, has ‘very carefully to consider how his measures, especially in dealing with foreigners, will affect those of influence around him. The Crown Prince also has the whole military power of the Kingdom, such as it is, in his hands and the King reasonably places much value on his hearty concurrence in all measures”.

After a preliminary agreement had been reached through informal negotiations conducted on behalf of the King by the French Bishop, Colonel Phayre was received in public by the King on October 16. The King wavered for a few days and finally objected to two articles in the proposed treaty. He could not at once bind himself not to increase the frontier duties, and he could not allow, owing to religious scruples, the importation of opium into China through his territory.

These discussions came to a satisfactory conclusion early in November, and the treaty was signed.

It contained nine articles. Article 1 provided for the continuation of the existing friendship between the British and Burmese Governments. Article 2 provided for the protection of Burmese subjects, specially traders, who might proceed to British territory for commercial purposes. Article 3 provided for similar protection to British traders in Burmese territory. This article was proposed by the Burmese themselves. Colonel Phayre wrote to the Government of India, "Had I proposed it they would have professed to see great danger to themselves in it. As it stands the British Government can always require justice to be done to British subjects in Burma". Article 4 provided for the regulation of duties on sea-borne goods meant for importation into Burmese territory.<sup>1</sup> Such goods were to pay at Rangoon one per cent.<sup>2</sup> on their value, and might be conveyed through the Burmese territory to other countries free of duty. The Burmese were at liberty to put an internal or municipal duty on goods sold in their cities ; at that time they were not prepared to give up all taxes on consumers. Article 5 provided that goods imported into Burma from China for export to Rangoon would pay a duty of one per cent. to the Burmese Government. By Article 6 Burmese merchants were allowed to come to, and

<sup>1</sup> This article authorised the importation of opium into China through Burmese territory. The King was averse to admitting by a special article that the drug might be conveyed through his country, but said he would not object to its coming in like other goods under article 4.'

<sup>2</sup> The regular duty was 12½ p.c.

travel in, British territory. Article 7 authorised British merchants to proceed up the Irrawaddy into Burmese territory 'in such manner as they please without hindrance', to 'purchase whatever they may require' and to 'settle in any part of the Burmese territory'. Although the King objected to the mention of the word 'steamer' in the treaty on the ground that his people would be alarmed, he was 'fully prepared under this article for the appearance of British steamers in the Irrawaddy and for our merchants to settle at Bhamo'. Thus the road to China was fairly opened to British steamers as far as they could go, and British merchants could deal at Bhamo with Chinese caravans. Article 8 provided that the British Government might abolish within one year the duties imposed on the Burmese frontier. The provision was made optional, because King Mindon refused to abolish the duties imposed on the Burmese side of the frontier *at once*, although he declared that they would be abolished as soon as possible. Colonel Phayre did not raise any strong objection to this arrangement, as he was 'satisfied that the state of the King's finances rendered it absolutely impossible for him to give up his frontier duties *at once*'. Article 9 provided for people passing through the Burmese territory to the British territory without hindrance: "Should tea planters of Assam, therefore, wish to import Chinese labourers, they have only to send an agent to Bhamo and no doubt they will be able to engage many". Colonel Phayre justly claimed that the treaty was 'highly favourable to British interests'.

The Government of India expected that the Burmese would insist on permission being granted for the importation of arms and warlike stores through British territory. Colonel Phayre was rather surprised to find that the Burmese Ministers did not mention the subject at all. He wrote, "The fact is there is a manufactory for small arms at Mandalay under the direction of a Frenchman, a good practical engineer and founder. I visited the place. He has turned out very fair rifles, makes percussion caps and manufactures gun-powder. The Burmese Government 'do not, therefore, feel anxious on the subject of warlike stores."

The Government of India came to the resolution that the terms secured by the treaty were 'as favourable as could have been hoped for'. Colonel Phayre was asked to 'deal liberally with the Burmese Government in the interpretation of the treaty'. At the same time it was considered necessary to appoint a British Agent at Mandalay 'in order to prevent misunderstandings from arising between British subjects and the Burmese authorities . . . . and to allay them when they arise'. The following Agents held office in succession : Dr. Williams (1862-1864), Captain (later Sir Edward) Sladen (1864-1869), Major MacMahon (1869-1872), Captain Strover (1872-1875), Colonel Duncan (1875-1878), Mr. Shaw (1878-1879), Colonel Browne (1879), Mr. St. Barbe (1879).

We have already seen that in 1862 King Mindon assured Colonel Phayre of his desire to abolish the duties levied by his Government on the Anglo-Burmese frontier, although he declined to give immediate effect to the proposal. After

his appointment at Mandalay Captain Sladen repeatedly brought the matter before the Burmese Ministers, but frontier duties continued to be levied in Burmese territory. The Ministers plainly told him that they were 'as anxious as the English to do away with export and import duties, but that the Government was *too poor* to give up a present certain item of revenue until it could see its way to some corresponding equivalent'. The Chief Commissioner considered it 'probable' that the Burmese Government was really unable to give up the duties, but Captain Sladen thought that the opposition of the Burmese Ministers was due to their 'spirit of conservation'. The British Agent remarked in his *Diary* that the Burmese 'apprehended mischief rather than gain to themselves from too general an intercourse with Europeans'. He quoted with approval his predecessor's statement that "the discouragement of trade is regarded by the Burmese as one of their principal safeguards against an overwhelming irruption of too grasping and indocile foreigners".

Whatever might have been the reasons behind the obstinate refusal of the Burmese to abolish the frontier duties, they could not be accused of repudiating the treaty of 1862. The Chief Commiss<sup>o</sup>n<sup>r</sup> admitted in a letter to the Government of India that "as the frontier duties on the British side were not abolished until June, 1863, the Burmese might, under the spirit of article 8 of the treaty, be allowed until June, 1867, to come to a final conclusion." He suggested however, the conclusion of a special convention containing the following provisions:

(1) The Burmese Government would furnish annual valuation lists of goods exported and imported.

(2) The Burmese Government would not impose on any article a duty of more than 5 per cent.

(3) The Burmese Government would allow a British Agent to attend the Burmese frontier custom house to hear 'complaints regarding overcharges of duty by the officials, for the purpose of transmitting a reporter thereon to the Chief Commissioner's Agent at Mandalay, who would address the Ministers thereon'. This suggestion was not accepted by the Government of India. The Chief Commissioner was informed,

" . . . both yourself and your Agent at Mandalay should encourage the Burmese Government to try the experiment of a reduction of frontier duties . . . They will have sufficient time between the present time and 1867 to test the result of such a reduction; and if that result proved favourable, it would probably lead to some real action in the spirit of article 8 of the treaty."

Another question that demanded the constant attention of the Chief Commissioner and the British Agent was the suppression of frontier dacoites. Burmese robber chiefs sometimes made violent raids into British territory and caused considerable damage to life and property. Although the Burmese Ministers made honest attempts to restrain the miscreants living within their jurisdiction, yet the frontier was never safe from spasmodic outbreaks of violence. On one occasion Captain Sladen said something which a Burmese Minister interpreted as an expression of suspicion against the

Burmese Government. At once he replied, "You cannot suppose we are such fools as to think we can get back Pegu by a few bands of dacoits. No. The King and all of us are as much, or more, concerned about these dacoities as you or the English Government can be."

In October, 1865, Captain Sladen presented the King with a 'handsomely bound' copy of Wheaton's *International Law* and volunteered to translate 'such portions of the work as might be deemed suitable or convenient for the information of the King or his ministers.' He told the King that his object was to provide His Majesty with 'a ready means of reference in any case of doubt or misunderstanding which might arise in his intercourse with foreign states, and of ascertaining for himself how the most civilized nations of the world would most probably be guided under similar circumstances.' Whether any translation was made for the enlightenment of the Burmese King, we do not know.

A few days later Captain Sladen suggested in a letter to the King that, if it was found impracticable to abolish the frontier duties altogether, he might effect 50 p.c. reduction for a given number of years. The King sent a conciliatory reply and promised to discuss the matter later on.

Colonel Phayre's term of office as Chief Commissioner was coming to a close, and he wanted, before leaving Burma, to bring to a satisfactory conclusion the negotiations concerning the frontier duties. In a report submitted to the Government of India (June, 1866) he stated that the Burmese officers did not faithfully adhere to the schedule of duties officially

prescribed by their Government. The result was that traders were 'practically without any redress in cases where they knew, or had reason to believe, they were called up to pay more than they ought to pay.' At the same time it was his conviction that the Burmese Government could not afford to give up the import and export duties on the frontier.<sup>1</sup> He remarked, "It would be driving them to extremity to require them to do so; their finances will not admit of such a loss of revenue." He, therefore, suggested that the Burmese Government should be requested 'to enter into an arrangement, either in the form of subsidiary treaty or other written agreement,' containing the following provisions:

(1) With effect from June, 1867, the Burmese Government would not levy more than 5 p.c. duty on the goods exported from or imported into its territory. This provision would not be applicable to goods brought in under article 5 of the treaty of 1862 and goods sent for sale in countries beyond Burma under article 4 of the same treaty. "No demand other than the said 5 p.c. will be made from any merchant, whether for royalty expenses or otherwise."

(2) In order to determine the real market value of imported and exported goods at Mandalay, a list of prices prepared annually by the Burmese Government and approved by the Government of India will be followed by the customs officers.

(3) An Agent of the Government of India would be allowed to live at the chief frontier customs house within

<sup>1</sup> This view is confirmed by Captain Sladen's Diary.

Burmese territory to hear all complaints made by British subjects as to grievances in regard to the duties they might be called upon to pay and to refer all disputed cases to the British Agent at Mandalay.

A satisfactory understanding on these points Colonel Phayre regarded as 'absolutely necessary.' If the Burmese Government refused to accept the terms proposed by the British Government, it was to be declared that the Viceroy of India would 'consider the propriety of reimposing duties on the British side as before.'<sup>1</sup> There were some other points which a visit to Mandalay might enable him to include in the proposed agreement:

(1) The right of monopoly enjoyed by the King might be modified to some extent in favour of British subjects. An assurance might be obtained to the effect that "all British subjects who had legally purchased any article of produce, whether monopolized or not, should be allowed to export it in the usual way".

(2) The King claimed a special right to interdict the export of teak timber when he deemed fit. Colonel Phayre remarked, "It may be necessary to leave this unnoticed; but the subject will be kept in view".

(3) Attempts might be made to secure 'an open recogni-

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Phayre suggested the imposition of export duties on certain articles of food, some of which the people of Upper Burma required and some of which they could only obtain in sufficient quantity from British Burma. In 1864-65, a large quantity of rice (7,172 tons), paddy (52,407 tons), salt (242,320 mds.), betelnut (24,851 mds.) and *ngapee* or 'fish paste' (525,751 mds.) was exported from British Burma to Upper Burma. The total value of these exports was Rs. 4021,143.

tion of the right of British subjects to export precious metals from Burmese territory<sup>1</sup>.

The Government of India accepted Colonel Phayre's suggestions and authorized him to proceed to Mandalay in order to conclude a new agreement with the Burmese Government. Colonel Phayre's journey was delayed by the sudden outbreak of a rebellion in Upper Burma under the leadership of some members of the royal family. The Chief Commissioner arrived at Mandalay after the suppression of the rebellion (November 7, 1866). The King's mind was at that time very uneasy. Still he was not very unwilling to entertain Colonel Phayre's proposals. He conceded most of the points enumerated in the draft treaty prepared by the Chief Commissioner, but "eventually the whole question of treaty or no treaty (in the words of Colonel Phayre) turned on the existence or otherwise of monopolies, which the King then positively refused to abandon". Colonel Phayre was prepared to allow monopoly on precious stones and petroleum. His principal aim was "to fix the articles that would not (or under treaty could not) be monopolised, so that agriculturists might safely devote themselves to their culture, and merchants

<sup>1</sup> Even the export of cattle was not allowed. A Burmese Minister said to Captain Sladen, "The King will not allow cattle to be exported; he thinks by doing so he indirectly assists in their slaughter." Captain Sladen refused to accept this explanation. He remarked, "Perhaps the chief reason for interdicting the export of cattle generally is, as in the case of bullion, the idea or theory prevalent in this part of the world at least, that a country becomes poor and impoverished in proportion to the amount of the produce abstracted, even when that produce is applied to the legitimate purpose of trade."—Captain Sladen's Diary, July 12, 1866.

might know they would be purchasable in open market". The King refused to restrict his commercial privilege; no treaty was signed.

Colonel Phayre left Burma soon after his return to Rangoon. He was succeeded by Colonel Fytche,<sup>1</sup> Commissioner of Tenasserim. He at once took up the question of monopolies, and he was warmly supported by the Government of India. In January, 1867, Sir John Lawrence<sup>2</sup> addressed a letter to the King of Burma, requesting him 'to relax and ultimately to remove altogether the royal monopolies' which paralysed 'in a great measure' commercial transactions between British and Burmese territories. The Viceroy pointed out that the policy pursued by the King entailed far greater injury on his own subjects: "His Majesty's subjects are impoverished and disheartened; his Majesty's own revenues have fallen far below their proper standard, and there is a wide-spread discontent among those who ought to be his Majesty's most devoted adherents." The King's attention was drawn to the value of British assistance: "His Majesty quite recently had keen experience not only of the peril by which his crown is beset from domestic sedition, but also of the value of the British Government's friendship."<sup>3</sup> Finally

<sup>1</sup> In his delightful book, *Burma, Past and Present*, Colonel Fytche gives many interesting autobiographical details.

<sup>2</sup> Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1864-1869.

<sup>3</sup> Probably the Viceroy referred indirectly to the fact that the British Government had not taken any advantage of the King's troubles at the time of the rebellion. In 1868 the Myeen-Goon Prince, King Mindon's rebel son, was captured by the British authorities in Rangoon and sent, at first to Port Blair and then to the fort of Chunar.

the Viceroy declared that "in consequence of the Burmese Government's refusal to carry out the terms to which it was pledged by Article 8 of the Treaty of 1862, the Government of India intends to re-impose, from the month of June next, the Customs duties at the frontier leviable on goods exported into Burmah, which were conditionally abolished in 1863."

When the Viceroy's letter reached Mandalay, the position of the King was perilous indeed. The rebels had raised their heads again. A famine threatened the country, and the abrupt re-imposition of the frontier duties by the British Government was likely to aggravate matters materially. On the other hand, British Burma was favoured with 'a most abundant harvest' and the British authorities could, if they pleased, 'well provide for the necessities of Upper Burma.' Under the circumstances the King could not but adopt a conciliatory attitude. On March 4 he saw Captain Sladen and told him that it was his 'firm intention to reduce the duties and to abolish all monopolies' from the commencement of the Burmese new year (corresponding to April 15, 1867). He said that his inability to conclude a treaty at the time of Colonel Phayre's visit was due to the disturbances in his kingdom: "I am ready to enter into a treaty now. You know that when Colonel Phayre was here the country could hardly be called our own: the *dah* (sword) was not yet sheathed; all was in confusion; and I did not know what to do." When the substance of this interview was communicated to Colonel Fytche, he asked Captain Sladen to inform the King that proposals for an additional treaty could be discussed only after the abolition

of monopolies and reduction of duties within the King's territories. He added, "Orders have been passed for the re-imposition of the frontier duties on the British side of the frontier, and these orders will be strictly enforced, until such time as the British Government have practical proof that his Majesty has actually abolished his monopolies, and reduced the duties within his territory."

In a letter dated April 11, 1867, the Government of India asked Colonel Fytche to inform the King that, if he "has fully made up his mind to abolish the monopoly system, and limit to a moderate amount his frontier duties, the Government of India will be prepared to reconsider the intention of reimposing its frontier duties." The Governor-General-in-Council was quite prepared to re-enter into negotiations for the purpose of concluding a new treaty, "on the understanding that His Majesty shall first have carried into effect the measures he has now expressed his willingness to execute." Colonel Fytche, thereupon wrote to Captain Sladen, "If the King should actually carry the proposed reforms into effect by the 15th May next, the British Government on its side will forbear to reimpose its duties."

The strong attitude adopted by the Government of India did not find favour with the Secretary of State, Sir Stafford Northcote, who expressed his disapproval of the plan to re-impose export duties on the British frontier. Colonel Fytche was accordingly asked to drop the plan and to instruct Captain Sladen "to press upon the King our forbearance as an argument which may weigh with his Majesty as an

additional reason for carrying into effect the reforms" wanted by the British authorities.

The King, however, was so much in earnest that on April 16, before he could get any scent of the ukase from England, he issued a proclamation which reduced the frontier duties, both export and import, to five per cent *ad valorem* and abolished monopolies with some exceptions. Colonel Fytche agreed that the King had "to a large extent met the propositions made by Colonel Phayre in his draft treaty, as far as customs and monopolies are concerned," but he suspected that "the real working of the measure may not accord with the apparent intention of the King." He continued, "Even if he be in earnest, some difficulty will, I am sure, be felt in the conduct of his officials. For a long period after the occupation of Pegu by the British there was great difficulty felt in abolishing the irregular exactions made from the people by our officials, who had been trained under the former Native Government." The idea of re-imposing duties on the British frontier was naturally abandoned.

The question of concluding a new treaty could now be conveniently taken up, but the British authorities decided to wait for overtures from the other side. Colonel Fytche instructed Captain Sladen "not to show anxiety on our part as to the negotiations, but rather to let the King take the initiative in the matter." On June 22, the Government of India reported to the Secretary of State that "to extort an engagement from His Majesty's apprehensions is far from our wishes." Throughout the negotiations the Government of

India wanted to approach the King in a spirit of 'conciliation and assurance,' but Colonel Fytche and Captain Sladen do not seem to have been very careful in this respect.

Upon the satisfactory conclusion of the negotiations about trade, Colonel Fytche tried to invite the King's attention to the continuance of frontier dacoities. In the Pegu Division 261 cases were reported during the years 1861-1866. In the Tonghoo district 43 dacoities were committed by gangs from Upper Burma during the same period, and in the Prome district the reported cases numbered 236. In a letter to the Government of India, dated May 6, 1867, the Chief Commissioner observed, "We cannot be expected to submit to the existence of these frontier gangs without serious remonstrance, for, independent of the actual crime committed by them during their inroads, they keep alive in the evil-disposed of our own subjects that tendency to dacoity which exists in the Burman disposition, and which the former style of government fostered". In an interview with Captain Sladen on April 2 the King said that the responsibility for the dacoities lay on some rebel Burmese officials living in and around Thayet-myo (within British territory), and expressed his intention to take adequate preventive measures. When Captain Sladen's report reached the Chief Commissioner, the latter asked the Agent to inform the King that the leaders of the dacoits were known to, and sometimes employed by, His Majesty's officials. In a letter to the Government of India, dated May 6, the Chief Commissioner remarked that the rebel Burmese officials living in and around Thayet-myo had

'nothing whatever to do with the frontier dacoities', and were in no way mixed up in them. Finally, the King sent a special officer to reside with a guard at Shazeeboo and asked his frontier officers to co-operate with British officers in the apprehension of dacoits. When Colonel Fytche saw the King in October, he informed His Majesty that brigandage had decreased on the frontier.

In his interview with the King on April 2 Captain Sladen asked him 'to enter into a closer and more liberal alliance with the British Government' and referred to British treaties with China, Japan, and Siam. The King wanted to see copies of these treaties, and Captain Sladen agreed to procure them. Colonel Fytche informed Captain Sladen that treaties with those countries could not be accepted as a guide for any negotiations relating to a new treaty with the King of Burma. He wrote to the Government of India on May 6, "The residence in, and movements through, these countries (i.e., China, Japan and Siam) of British subjects are much more hampered and restricted by treaty, than are the residence or movements of our subjects in the Burmese territories under the existing treaty with the King. Burma, from its geographical situation and relative position to the British territories in the East, must be expected to make a treaty more liberal towards our subjects than might be asked of the Kingdoms of China, Japan and Siam . . .

On May 20, 1867, Colonel Fytche recommended to the Government of India that "the draft treaty submitted by Colonel Phayre last year to the court of Ava be still adhered

to in any renewed negotiations with the King". On one vital point he disagreed with the Government of India. In a letter dated April 11, 1867, the Government had observed, "Occasion might be taken in such a treaty to insert an article providing that the Court of Burmah should hold no communication with any foreign prince, excepting through the British Government, or with its express sanction." This injunction was apparently inspired by the report that the King was sending a 'quasi-mission' to Paris.<sup>1</sup> Colonel Fytche refused to 'broach such a subject' on the following grounds: "There can be no doubt that it would receive the greatest opposition from many of the foreign semi-advisers of the Court of Ava

. . . A distorted view of our intentions would be presented to him and enlarged upon by interested parties near his person; and even before the subject was introduced, he might be filled with distrust and alarm."

On June 13, 1867, Colonel Fytche forwarded to the Government of India a letter from the King and a draft treaty which differed in certain respects from the draft treaty

<sup>1</sup> This Mission consisted of a Burmese official educated in Calcutta and 'two Burmese youths who resided for three or four years in Paris.' Its 'ostensible object' was to purchase machinery for cotton-weaving, crockery-making, etc.; but Colonel Fytche suspected that its real object was 'to purchase what is necessary for the manufacture of gun, shot, shell and powder.' It was furnished with 'several draft proposals for a treaty with the Emperor of the French, offering concessions regarding opening communications with China from Cambodia.' It was also provided with valuable presents 'to bribe French officials into friendship.' Colonel Fytche remarked, "The Mission is a piece of petty State intrigue, and is as ridiculous as it is discreditable." He was instructed by the Government of India to allow the Mission to leave Rangoon without 'affording it any special facilities.' (April, 1867).

prepared by Colonel Phayre in 1866. Colonel Fytche recommended that the modifications introduced by the Burmese Government should not be accepted. The Government of India suggested certain alterations in the draft treaty of the Burmese Government, but requested Colonel Fytche to remember that "no pressure should be put upon the King to execute a treaty, containing any provisions not in entire accordance with His Majesty's own views and wishes".

Meanwhile Captain Sladen had secured from the King a written guarantee that the terms generally of Colonel Phayre's treaty should be agreed to previous to the renewal, on our part, of any further treaty negotiations'. The Government of India thereupon authorised Colonel Fytche to proceed to Mandalay.

Colonel Fytche, accompanied by his wife, several officers and 72 soldiers, left Rangoon on September 20, 1867, and landed at Mandalay on October 8. He had his first audience with the King on October 11. He observed, "This early reception was considered as a mark of condescension, as it has been the custom of the Court to require a much longer interval before receiving an embassy . . ." On October 19 the Envoy was favoured with a private audience. The conversation turned round the proposed British exploring expedition from Bhamo to China (which the King agreed to assist), the suppression of frontier dacoities, and the activities

of the rebels in the Karen and Shan countries. Colonel Fytche was requested to supply two steamers and 8,000 rifles.

On October 21 Colonel Fytche visited some high Burmese officials for the purpose of discussing matters regarding the treaty. The negotiations were entirely conciliatory. Colonel Fytche wrote, "Some corrections were made in the draft treaty, making more clear the provisions of the articles . . . no important alterations were proposed by the minister, nor any desire of pressing them shown. The subjects from various aspects were dilated upon, but throughout the whole day's conversation no opposition on either side became necessary". The treaty was signed and sealed in the palace on October 25. The Mission left Mandalay on October 28.

In submitting a short narrative of the Mission for the information of the Government of India, Colonel Fytche observed, "From the time the party crossed the frontier, until it left Mandalay, there was the most manifest desire to show every consideration and respect towards the representative of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General. During the progress up the river, every provision was made for the comfort and convenience of the party. At the capital the accommodation provided was exceptionally handsome and commodious. In all the details connected with the interviews with His Majesty measures were taken to show the importance attached by the Court to a fitting reception at the palace; and in the more direct and personal communication with His Majesty and his ministers the most friendly tone prevailed". This manifestation of good will was specially remarkable in

view of the fact that "just one year previously the Court of Ava had declined to enter into further treaty engagements with the British Government".

With regard to the treaty itself, Colonel Fytche observed, "Its terms, which provide for greater freedom in the trade of the two countries and greater security for British interests in the Burmese territory, are eminently calculated to develop the commercial relations of the two nations". The Government of India regarded the treaty as "highly satisfactory, and calculated to promote the prosperity of both countries"<sup>1</sup>.

We have already referred to the proposal initiated by the Government of India, and opposed by Colonel Fytche, that a provision binding the Burmese King to communicate with foreign powers through the British Government alone should be inserted in the treaty. In pursuance of instructions from Calcutta Colonel Fytche asked Captain Sladen to secure the consent of the King, if possible, but to 'refrain from the subject' if he found it 'distasteful to His Majesty'. There is nothing in the documents to reveal what efforts, if any, were made by Captain Sladen to secure the consent of the King to this proposal. The fact that no provision embodying it was included in the treaty is rather significant. In his letter dated February 15, 1868, the Secretary of State observed, "In abstaining from pressing upon the Burmese Government the insertion in the

<sup>1</sup> The Government, however, regarded as superfluous the stipulation that the duties on the Burmese side should not be reduced below 3 per cent. (Article II). Colonel Fytche was also asked to make it clear that the Government of India could not surrender criminals for theft except in aggravated cases (Articles IX and X).

treaty of an article limiting the King's intercourse with other European States to communications with them made through the representatives of the British Government, your Excellency acted wisely. The imposition of such a restriction would have been offensive to the King and the probable evasion of it at some future time might, in such a case, lead to complications of a very inconvenient character".

The treaty is thoroughly commercial in character, but it contains one important provision of political significance. Article 5 authorised the British Government "to establish a Resident or Political Agent in Burmese territory". As Colonel Fytche observed, "Heretofore the position of that officer has not been secured by treaty"<sup>1</sup>. The Agent was invested with final jurisdiction in all civil suits between registered British subjects at the capital (of the King) and authorised to decide, in co-operation with a Burmese officer of rank, all civil cases between Burmese subjects and registered British subjects.

In his letter to the Duke of Argyll, Secretary of State for India, Captain Spyre<sup>2</sup> described this treaty as a fruit of indirect coercion exercised by Colonel Fytche over the Burmese authorities. He said, "Systematic persistent pressure from the representatives of a superior power, however

<sup>1</sup> Although Captain Sladen was generally well treated, yet there were occasions when Burmese jealousy manifested itself. On September 15, 1865, he noted in his Diary, "Even European residents have been warned against friendly visit to and by the Agent, and that too by an officer of the King, who said that, in giving the warning, he was acting under direct orders of the King."

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 198-199.

courteously it may be cloaked, or concealed, or prohibited in official despatches, is no less felt as a *force* by an isolated weak power. The Burman sovereign and his ministers of the period, if sufficiently independent, would probably make known that *such pressure alone* caused them to enter into the treaty of 1867, notwithstanding that Despatches between the Political Agent at Rangoon, his Assistant at Mandalay, and the Government of India, may represent it to have been voluntarily proffered by the King, to allow the establishment of a British judicial court in their capital, they being refused a court of corresponding jurisdiction and powers at Rangoon; to establish a new British Political Military Agency with an imposing establishment at Bhamo, subordinate to the Military Assistant Political Agent at Mandalay, and ostensibly to concur in Captain Sladen's expedition to Bhamo, for conveyance by British steamers to Rangoon, the traffic now carried on by Chinese caravans, between the north-west of Yunan and Burma, over better and safer routes *to and from the Burman Capital*, to the great benefit of its traders and inhabitants, and of the King's Government".

This treaty, read in connection with Colonel Fytche's plans to construct a railway (which Captain Sprye described as 'commercially needless') from Rangoon to Prome and to build, through a Company subsidised by the Government<sup>1</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> In May, 1866, Dr. C. Williams, the late Agent to the Chief Commissioner, arrived at Mandalay in the capacity of Agent to the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company Limited. Captain Sladen noted in his Diary,

steamers 'of a size and power capable of rapidly conveying entire British regiments from the Prome terminus of such railways to Mandalay', must have led (Captain Spyre thought) the Burmese King and his advisers to suspect that the British Government intended to annex their country. Captain Spyre also referred to the 'too loud cry of some officials and merchants' for annexation. In his published history of the Bhamo expedition Captain Bowers openly advocated annexation. Even Colonel Fytche's despatches (Captain Spyre thought) 'too plainly hinted at' such a measure. The merchants declared that they "*must so extend commerce* that annexation shall in certainty follow, and make the Upper Salween our eastern boundary as far north at least as the latitude of Momien". Whether King Mindon knew it or not, the political and commercial influence of his British friends was peacefully penetrating into his exclusive sovereignty.

The proposal for opening commercial relations between Burma, the Shan States and Western China originated with Captain Spyre, an officer of the Madras Army, long before the

"The object of this Company in establishing an Agency at Mandalay seems to be somewhat experimentally directed towards ascertaining the feasibility of trading on a large scale with Upper Burma, and of extending at the same time their operations to commercial enterprises with the south-western provinces of China." Captain Sladen's Diary makes it clear that King Mindon and his officers were nervous about this new enterprise. In January, 1869, the King told him that he could not hold himself responsible for the safety of British steamers if they proceeded above Mandalay. He said, "The population generally may be led to believe that Burma is again invaded, and the steamer may get into difficulties." Captain Sladen silenced him by referring to 'treaty rights.'

annexation of Pegu. Captain Sprye had served in the First Burmese War and was afterwards employed in survey work in the province of Tenasserim. For the next 40 years he 'searchingly collected' geographical and commercial information about the above proposal and printed many pamphlets, circulars and maps. His enthusiasm finally attracted the attention of the authorities, and Captain Williams, Executive Engineer, Rangoon Division, British Burma, was asked to submit a detailed report on the subject. Captain Williams submitted his report on January 21, 1865. Three proposed routes were examined. The first, a direct land route, was to commence at Rangoon and follow as straight a course as practicable across the north-east frontier of British Burma, to Kiang-Tung, and thence to Kiang-Hung on the Mekong or Upper Kamboj river. The second was a river and land route, starting by river from Rangoon, and proceeding thence to Magwe, on the left bank of the Irrawaddy; the railway was to commence there, and taking a north-easterly direction, through Yemethen and Myoung Yuwe, to go up to the Salween river, thence following the first route to Kiang-Hung. The third, another combined river and land route, was to commence at Rangoon, proceed by the Irrawaddy to Mandalay, and thence advance by railway through Barno to Talifoo, in the north-west of the Yunan province of China. Captain Sprye supported the first route, but in 1864 Colonel Phayre took a different view. After a critical examination of the geographical and financial aspects of the question, Captain Williams stated, " . . . I do not

hesitate to record it as my professional opinion, founded on my own personal knowledge of the features of the country to be traversed, acquired during a residence of nearly 12 years in British Burma, that the 'direct land route' suggested by Captain Sprye . . . has in no way been shown to be impracticable, but, on the contrary, that what is before me in support of such an opinion tends strongly to establish the very reverse, the perfect practicability of the route for a railway".

Discussions over this matter continued for some years. In September, 1866, the Rangoon-Kyang-Hung line was ordered to be surveyed by Lord Cranborne, the then Secretary of State. After 'fruitless remonstrances' with him against the survey, the Government of India selected Captain Luard and Captain Williams for the service. Their work satisfied the Government of India and Colonel Fytche recommended that the survey should be continued to the frontier of China. This survey was suddenly stopped, according to Captain Sprye (who described his views in detail in a letter dated March 30, 1870, to the Duke of Argyll, the then Secretary of State), "on misrepresentations of the distance remaining to be surveyed, of the nature of the country and character of the people, of consequent difficulties, nay, even perils to be encountered, of the length of time it must occupy, and of the expense it would involve beyond what the treasury of India could bear". Captain Sprye thought that "those misrepresentations were made, and the completion of the survey of the direct route countermanded, solely that the very much longer,

far more difficult, politically more dangerous, and infinitely more costly, survey of the Bhamo route might be entered upon, under the advice of the Chief Commissioner, though contrary to the real feelings and wishes of the King of Burmah, his Ministers, and people."

This Chief Commissioner was Colonel Fytche. In a memorandum dated June 30, 1869, prepared in connection with Captain Sladen's report regarding his journey to Yunan, he stated that he had 'always looked on the Kiang-Hung line as a most Quixotic scheme as a route for trade'. Captain Sprye was naturally offended, and referred to a letter of Colonel Fytche, dated June 10, 1861, in which the latter had officially described this route 'as a really useful and thoroughly practical project for more rapid communication with the west of China'. According to Captain Sprye, Colonel Fytche had changed his views on succeeding to the Chief Commissionership in 1867. Then "he devoted himself to diplomatic intercourse with the court of Burma, . . . to prosecuting and realising his Bhamo route, to the exclusion of the direct line to Kyang-Hung, more especially after Lord Cranborne resigned the seals of the India Office". Captain Sprye thought that the Bhamo route, useless for British commercial objects, would serve the purpose of "those who desire and strive to bring about the annexation of Upper Burma and its dependencies; of those who, as holders of tea plantations in Assam, &c., erroneously believe it would lead to the opening of a way across the wilds of Upper Burma by which they should receive from Bhamo unlimited and cheap Chinese labour; and of

those others at Rangoon, Calcutta, and Glassgow, who, forming the Irrawaddy Steam Flotilla Company, too naturally desire that that river should be the sole route for trade with the west of China".

When Colonel Fytche paid visit to King Mindon at Mandalay in October, 1867, he had an opportunity to discuss with the King the proposed British expedition for the exploration of the Bhamo route to Western China. The King agreed to extend his approval and assistance to this expedition,<sup>1</sup> and by an edict dated October 26, 1867, he ordered all officers within his territories 'to further the progress of the English party by every means in their power'. Captain Sladen was appointed to lead the party, and Captain Williams was asked to accompany him "for the purpose of making a flying survey of the route". The total cost of the expedition was expected to be Rs. 41,590.

In his instructions to Captain Sladen, dated November 11, 1867, Colonel Fytche clearly explained the objects of the expedition entrusted to him. Yule valued the trade which flowed from Yunan to Bhamo in 1855 at half a million pounds sterling. This flourishing trade almost entirely ceased as a result of an outbreak of civil war in Yunan.<sup>2</sup> The 'principal

<sup>1</sup> Captain Sprye thought that this approval was not voluntary and that Captain Fytche's proposal must have led the King and his advisers to suspect that the British Government were making preparations to annex their country.

<sup>2</sup> A civil war broke out in Yunan about the year 1856. A Frenchman wrote in July, 1861, ". . . Yunan in general, and particularly that portion of it that is contiguous to Burma, is in the uttermost confusion and desolation. In the beginning the civil war raged only between the Muhammadans

object of the mission' was 'to investigate thoroughly the causes of the cessation of trade,<sup>1</sup> to discover the exact political position occupied by the Khakyens, the Shans to the eastward, and the Pansee Government in Yunan, and to endeavour to influence these several communities towards the re-establishment of trade'. Captain Sladen was asked to enter into an agreement, by offering subsidy, if necessary, with the Khakyens who, it was expected, 'virtually held the passes', so that safe passage of traders might be ensured. It was also necessary to collect information about the position of the Shan States,<sup>2</sup> as regards the Chinese on the one hand and the Pansees on the other. The most careful enquiries, however, were to be directed to "the exact position of the Pansee Government . . . . there can be no doubt that no resuscitation of trade can take

and the Chinese, but now contention subsists among all tribes." In August, 1865, the Military Commander of Yunan informed the Burmese Government that the road between Yunan and Burma was open and safe for traffic. By that time the Pansees had obtained the upper hand in Yunan and they were anxious to restore the old commercial prosperity of the province. A Pansee Agent saw Captain Sladen in October, 1865, and assured him that Yunan was 'in all respects quiet and anxious to cultivate relations and open trade with and through Burma.'

<sup>1</sup> In his letter to the Duke of Argyll, dated March 30, 1870, Captain Sprye remarked, "Our British Burman Political Agents, and their Assistants at Mandalay, have greatly erred in considering and representing that the caravan trade formerly carried on between Northern Yunan and the Capital of Burma, via Bhamo, had *died out* during late years; such is not the case; that periodical overland traffic has been wisely *diverted* by the King of Burma from that long, difficult and perilous route to more direct, more easy, and far safer southern routes such as those through the Theinne and Toungbain valleys, to Mandalay, his capital, thus wholly avoiding the much longer Bhamo route, its Khakyen mountains, their different lawless tribes, and numerous exacting Chiefs."

<sup>2</sup> They were formerly tributary to Burma.

place except with their concurrence, as it is members of their body who . . . . will compose the trade caravans". Colonel Sladen was asked to go at least to Yunchang, where it was believed a high official of that government was stationed, and, if possible, to Talifoo, the probable seat of the Pansee Government. He was reminded that the object of the mission was purely commercial, and not political. He was, therefore, asked not to enter into any political negotiations or to use force if his progress was opposed by the hill tribes. His attention was directed towards the advisability of organising fairs at some fixed periods of the year in some suitable localities, in Bhamo if possible. He was also asked to collect information about the population, produce, ethnology, language, and customs of the people. Captain Williams was expected to collect information about various routes connecting China with Burma and Assam. The medical officer accompanying the party was expected to report on the geology and natural history of the several localities visited.

These instructions were generally approved by the Government of India, although the Governor-General-in-Council doubted the expediency of advancing as far as Talifoo and left the matter 'entirely to the discretion of Captain Sladen'. In addition, the mission was asked to report upon the expediency of appointing a British agent at Bhamo. "It would also be desirable", Captain Sladen was informed, "to ascertain the views and wishes of the people of Bhamo with respect to this particular measure, as well as the probable security of a British officer in so isolated a position, and the question of

whether the appointment of a native agent would not, in the first instance, prove a more suitable arrangement".

The Secretary of State approved the 'spirit of caution' which marked the proceedings of the Government of India with regard to the proposed mission, and added, "It would be most indiscreet to enter Chinese territory without a more accurate knowledge of current events within it than we at present possess, and any such step on our part could not fail to give umbrage to the Court of Pekin, which claims, though it appears only imperfectly to exercise, jurisdiction over that part of the Province of Yunnan on which the expedition would first set out".

The expedition started from Mandalay on January 13, 1868, in one of the steamers belonging to the King of Burma (who furnished Captain Sladen with letters for delivery to the Pansee, Chinese, and Shan authorities) and reached Bhamo on January 21. On February 1, Captain Sladen had 'a very satisfactory interview' with a Khakyen Chief, who undertook to escort the party in safety the whole way through his territories to Mowan, and build sheds for them at the different halting stages. The party safely proceeded through the Khakyen Hills and arrived at Pongsee, close to Mawae, on the borders of the Shan States, on 6th March. There Captain Sladen waited for an answer to a letter which he had addressed to the Pansee authorities at Momein. The answer was 'of a favourable nature, the Pansee chiefs being anxious for the arrival of the party in Yunnan'.

So long Colonel Fytche and the Government of India had

to remain content with incomplete and unsatisfactory reports about the progress of the party, because no letter from Colonel Sladen or any of his colleagues was available after their departure from Bhamo. Alarming reports were appearing in the press,<sup>1</sup> and the 'Government of India had to correspond telegraphically with Colonel Fytche regarding the safety of the party. The Government of India had also entered into correspondence with Sir Rutherford Alcock, Her Majesty's Envoy at Pekin, suggesting that "he might lay the whole matter before the Chinese authorities, with the view of furnishing assistance to the exploring party, or at any rate, of affording them information as to whether or no they should proceed into Chinese jurisdiction".

The anxiety of the Government<sup>2</sup> was removed to some extent by the receipt of a letter from Captain Sladen, dated April 28. Writing from Ponsee, only five marches from Bhamo, he explained in detail the circumstances which had detained him there since March 6. It appears that Burmese officials and Chinese oppositionists at Bhamo had entered into a conspiracy with the Khakyen Chiefs; their common object was 'to detain us here indefinitely for the purpose of enriching themselves at our expense by a system of indirect obstructiveness and extortion'. Acting under their 'advice a Chinese

<sup>1</sup> *Rangoon Times*, April 4, 1868.

<sup>2</sup> On November 28, 1867, the Foreign Secretary wrote to Colonel Fytche that "the Viceroy and Governor General in Council would prefer to see the expedition return without accomplishing the objects...rather than learn that the safety of Captain Sladen and the party accompanying him had been in any degree compromised."

robber chieftain, who held a fortified position at a place called Maupho, on the direct route of the mission, made arrangements 'to oppose our progress by every means in his power, and to cut up our party to a man'. In order to extricate himself from this unforeseen difficulty Captain Sladen opened up communication with officers of the Pansee Government at Momein. These officers requested the Khakyen Chiefs to give 'support and assistance' to the English party, and themselves promised to clear the way by sending a force against the Chinese robber chieftain. The tone of the Khakyen and Shan Chiefs at once altered. The troops sent by the Pansee officers captured the robber chieftain's post on April 15, and asked Captain Sladen to advance as far as Sanda, from where he was assured of being escorted to Momein.

This delay, although unexpected and annoying, was not altogether unprofitable. It enabled the "chiefs and people in the several States around to find out and judge for themselves by personal observation whether our mission is intended to be injurious to their interests, or likely to be of future benefit to their country by the simple evidence afforded of our desire to open out the country to foreign trade and resuscitate old sources of prosperity".

At the time of writing Captain Sladen was waiting for a convoy of mules from the Shan States. His plan was to push his way to Talifoo, if he could do so safely and without the fear of getting into difficulties with either the Pansee or the Chinese Government. He sent Captain Williams and another member of the party to Rangoon, because the funds at his

disposal had become so limited that it would have been almost impossible to continue the expedition, 'unless by a sensible reduction in the strength of our party'<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, owing to the commencement of the south-west monsoon, survey and exploration had "become impracticable.

In forwarding a copy of the above letter to the Government of India, Colonel Fytche praised 'the judgment and tact shown by Captain Sladen' and added that he had sent an engineer named Gordon to accompany the expedition for the purpose of surveying the routes.<sup>2</sup> He also sent the sum of Rs. 10,000 for the expenses of the party. A letter from a Burmese Minister received by the Chief Commissioner expressed the displeasure of the King at the conduct of his officials at Bhamo, who had been punished with dismissal.<sup>3</sup>

Although the King of Burma was trying his best to help the expedition,<sup>4</sup> yet the *Rangoon Gazette* accused him 'of behaving in an underhand manner, and doing all he could

<sup>1</sup> When the party left Bhamo, there was in the cash chest only about Rs. 5,500. During the next two months the expenses amounted very nearly to Rs. 2,000, and the sum of Rs. 500 was guaranteed to be paid for mule hire on arrival at Manwyne. So the sum at the disposal of the party towards the close of April was about Rs. 3,000.

<sup>2</sup> The Secretary of State in his despatch of October 31, 1868, disapproved Captain Sladen's conduct in sending Captain Williams to Rangoon and approved "Colonel Fytche's proceedings in supplying Captain William's place, with the least possible delay, by the deputation of an able substitute."

<sup>3</sup> On June 25 Colonel Fytche wrote to the Government of India that the King had "ordered the officials at Bhamo, who have been throwing obstacles in the way of the expedition, to be sent down to Mandalay to be punished."

<sup>4</sup> He even sent one of his Ministers to Rangoon to explain to Colonel Fytche in person his deep interest in the success of the mission.

to mar the success of the Bhamo expedition', and threatened him with 'the displeasure of the British Government and annexation of his country'. The King naturally complained to Colonel Fytche, who assured him of the confidence and goodwill of the British Government.

Mr. Gordon arrived at Mandalay on June 14. There he found that the news of the result of the Abyssinian War had already reached the Court.<sup>1</sup> After an audience with the King, he left Mandalay on June 16, arrived at Bhamo on June 28, and started to join Captain Sladen's party on 1st July, with a strong escort furnished by the Governor of Bhamo.

In the meantime Colonel Fytche had received a letter from Captain Sladen dated May 10. Captain Sladen was glad to report that all Shan Chiefs were prepared to receive him favourably and to 'conduct the expedition to Momein in a friendly and becoming style'. From the tenor of his letter Colonel Fytche suspected that the Shan and Pansee authorities were 'prepared to accede to the expedition a political importance which was not contemplated in its despatch'<sup>2</sup>.

In the meantime the British Minister at Pekin had requested the Chinese authorities to give such facilities and protection, 'as might be in their power to afford, in the present

<sup>1</sup> "The King was greatly interested in the events of the war, and refused at first to believe that the English success was true. When he learned that Theodore had killed himself on his defeat, he said that he was foolish to have provoked a war with so little chance of overcoming, and that he was still more unwise to kill himself."

<sup>2</sup> Captain Sladen remarked in his final report, "It would have been a vain attempt at hypocrisy to have ignored my political existence, or the political nature of the work I was engaged in."

disaffected and disturbed state of the province, to Captain Sladen's party'. The Chinese authorities had instructed their officials in Yunan 'to render every assistance to the party when it reaches their borders'.

This precaution was, however, found to be unnecessary. Captain Sladen reached Momein on May 26. "The advance through the Shan States", he observed, "was in effect an ovation. The population, generally speaking, of towns and villages turned out in crowds, and, on several occasions, greeted us with unmistakable signs of welcome as we passed through their several districts". A Pansee escort conducted him to Momein, where the Governor 'almost overwhelmed' the party with 'friendly hospitality'. The Governor and his officials were 'as eager and earnest' as the British Government 'in their desire for trade and for friendly commercial relations with foreign Governments'. Captain Sladen waited at Momein for a month and a half and achieved 'results' which, in his opinion, 'could not have been more complete', with the limited powers he held, even though he was not able to advance as far as the capital of the Pansee Government. These 'results' he summarised as follows :—

(1) The Pansee authorities fully approved the proposal of opening the trade route between Bhamo and Yunan *via* Bhamo and 'expressed a sincere wish to co-operate with and assist' the British authorities in this matter.

(2) The Pansee authorities volunteered to send a Mission to Rangoon with the view of instituting 'a general enquiry into the feasibility of direct trade with Rangoon merchants, by

the interchange of commodities at Bhamo, or other commercial mart'.

(3) Although the Governor of Momein declared that it would be premature at this stage to lay down definite rules about duties, he agreed to be 'faithfully guided' by Captain Sladen 'in all matters relating to the imposition or abolition of duties and the general improvement of trade'.

(4) The attitude of the Shan States had become 'one of friendly encouragement and undisguised goodwill'.

(5) The Khakyen Chiefs had become friendly and 'eagerly craved for their own particular route a monopoly of transit'.

(6) Three routes had been surveyed.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately Captain Sladen was not able to advance beyond Momein.<sup>2</sup> Yunan was still in a very disturbed condition owing to the continuation of civil strife. The country-side was infested by large bands of Chinese robbers. Under

<sup>1</sup> In his survey report Captain Williams described in some detail three alternative routes :

- (1) The northern, or Taping route, which was 'the worst of the three.'
- (2) The central, or Momouk route, which 'bears eastward from Bhamo, through the village or town of Momouk and the Khakyen hills, to Mowun, a Shan town, and thence to Momein.'
- (3) The southern, or Sawuddee route, 'which leaves the Irrawaddy at the village of that name near Kountoung, about eight miles south of Bhamo, proceeds by the Shwe-le valley to Yunchan, a distance of probably 220 miles.'

<sup>2</sup> About the same time a French 'exploring expedition' was trying to penetrate China from Saigon. Captain Sladen heard at Momein that the expedition had 'terminated in disaster.'

the circumstances he decided not to proceed towards Tali. Leaving Momein on July 13, he arrived at Bhamo towards the beginning of September. At that place Burmese officers received him 'like a prince'.

Colonel Fytche reported to the Government of India that it was possible to re-open the route to China through Bhamo. He continued, "I feel certain that there depends on the decision of Government a question of the very highest imperial importance. Our sea-borne trade with China is being actively competed for by America. It seems inevitable that sooner or later it will be diverted to the Pacific coast of that Continent . . . I mention these considerations because I would not have the Government suppose that, in strongly advocating the continuance of our efforts to open this trade with Western China, I am solely influenced by a wish to advance the interests of this province. The gain to British Burma in being a new highway to China would, doubtless, be very great; but it would be entirely subsidiary to the still greater gain of the Empire in having that highway established". He 'strongly supported' Captain Sladen's suggestion that a British Agent should be posted at Bhamo as soon as possible.

The Government of India hesitated to give immediate sanction to the plan of posting a British Agent at Bhamo. The rebels were still active in some parts of Upper Burma, and it was apprehended that the Agent's life would be exposed to serious risks in so isolated a station. Moreover, the Governor-General suspected that King Mindon would feel

alarmed if the number of British Agents in his dominions went on increasing.<sup>1</sup> Colonel Fytche sent a re-assuring reply.<sup>2</sup> Even then the Viceroy asked him to ascertain the King's 'consent, 'not by means of casual conversations but by a distinct assent to the plan carefully explained to him'. Accordingly Captain Sladen sought for and received a special audience with the King (January 11, 1869) and wanted a 'clear and distinct expression of His Majesty's opinion' on the matter. The King said that he had 'no objection whatever to the Bhamo appointment'; all that he stipulated for was that the British Government should not send an 'obstinate or intractable officer'. Captain Sladen reported that the King was 'sincere at present in his desire to avoid all suspicion of indirect opposition in the work of regenerating overland trade via Bhamo with South-Western China'. When this report was communicated to the Government of India, Colonel Fytche was authorised to appoint Captain Strover as Assistant Political Agent at Bhamo on a salary of Rs. 1,200 per month.

In July, 1868, Colonel Fytche sent to the Government of India a detailed plan for the construction of a telegraph line from Rangoon to Western China. His recommendation was

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Fytche wrote, "Doubtless the court of Ava are half-hearted in the matter. A lingering suspicion of our ulterior views will probably induce them to give the project but faint support, if it does not lead them to covert opposition."

<sup>2</sup> When King Mindon heard that a British Agent would be posted at Bhamo, he said to Captain Sladen, "I will take care. that there shall be a governor with whom he will pull well and be on friendly terms."

primarily based on imperial interests. He observed, "Seeing that Russia was in direct communication with Pekin and the Chinese coast; that England's nearest point of telegraphic communication with China is Calcutta, Rangoon, or Ceylon: that it would take the fastest steamer a fortnight at least to communicate from either of those places intelligence of war to Chinese ports, and to the Admiral commanding in Chinese waters; and that, in that time, incalculable damage might be done both to our ships and trade; a direct telegraphic communication with the Chinese ports from Rangoon might be of the greatest possible value". To this plan the Government of India objected on various grounds. It was very expensive. Moreover, the Government of India rightly suspected that it would be very difficult to construct and manage such a line at a time when there was no internal peace in Western China. For the time being Colonel Fytche's imperial scheme remained suspended.

It is not possible to ascertain whether King Mindon was really alive to the underlying significance of the treaties of 1862 and 1867 and the events narrated in this chapter. Step by step he was being outmanoeuvred by skilful British diplomats and induced (or compelled) to surrender effective authority over his dominions. His financial position was weakened by the surrender of frontier duties and the abolition of monopolies. His military position was weakened by the establishment of British control over the Irrawaddy through the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company. His political authority was undermined by the establishment of British

Agents at Mandalay and at Bhamo who never forgot, nor allowed him to forget, their 'treaty rights'. Sometimes he mildly protested, but in all cases he avoided open rupture. British officials in Burma were more anxious than the Government of India for the interests of British commerce and in the East the European commercial traveller was usually the guide of the invading army.



## CHAPTER VII

### TERRITORIAL AND COMMERCIAL QUESTIONS (1869-1878)

During the last years of King Mindon's reign some minor territorial questions embittered the relations between the Governments of India and Burma. The Burmese Ministers expressed a 'strong doubt' as to the validity of the treaty of Yandabo and 'encroached upon the British frontier in Arakan. The Government of India plainly refused 'to allow any controversy upon the general validity of this treaty, which is our permanent deed of settlement regarding the cession of the territory to which it relates and the description of the boundaries of the ceded districts'. With regard to the Arakan frontier it was not considered worth while to provoke complications with the Mandalay Government by proposing a thorough demarcation of the British boundary on that side.

Another dispute arose over the Eastern and Western Karenne States. When King Mindon refused to conclude a treaty recognising the cession 'of Pegu, Lord Dalhousie resolved to settle the matter by arbitrarily defining the future boundary between Upper and British Burma. A surveying party under Major Allan laid down the boundary from the west to the east, 'with little or no reference to geographical configuration, or social condition, of the country, along a certain parallel of latitude, which had been previously selected as the limit of British possession'. When the surveying party

reached the Western Karenne State, "they were stopped by a claim on the part of its inhabitants to the recognition of their independence, an independence which the Western Karennees asserted have been always respected by the King of Burma". Lord Dalhousie ordered the survey operations to be suspended at that point, recognised the independence of the Western Karennees, and declared that "if at any time an attempt should be made by the Ava Government to obtain possession of the Karenne country, the British Government should interpose to defeat that attempt".

In 1868 Kyay-pho-gyee, Chief of the Western Karenne State, died. His sons, Koontee and Koonsha, requested the British Government to undertake the administration of their territory. The Government of India refused to accede to this request. This decision was approved by the Secretary of State. Towards the beginning of the year 1873 it was brought to the notice of the Chief Commissioner by the Commissioner of the Tenasserim Division that Koontee was carrying on negotiations with the Burmese Government through an agent named Moung Kan. When the British officers demanded an explanation from Koontee, he declared that Moung Kan's visit to Mandalay had been undertaken merely for the purpose of raising money and from no political motive.

A few months later it was reported that the Burmese Government wanted to bring Koontee under its control and strongly pressed him to cut up all connections with the British Government. The Chief Commissioner recommended that 'some arrangements should be come to' with Koontee.

He observed, "The forests are very valuable, and as it is very material to keep the King out of this territory, I would strongly recommend a long lease of forests and mining rights". Koontee himself was very anxious to place himself under British protection. In order to convince the Government of India that Burma had no claim of suzerainty over the Western Karenne State, the Chief Commissioner pointed out that during the period 1857-1873 the Chiefs of that State had repeatedly asked for British protection without invoking any protest from the Burmese Government. If the Government of India decided to leave Koontee at the mercy of the Burmese, it would suffer 'loss of prestige' and the trade in teak carried on by British merchants would be endangered.

While this matter was being considered by the Government of India, Koontee was asked to go to Mandalay with his brother. On his refusal to comply with this order he was informed that a party of 700 Burmese troops would be sent to ravage his territory. At the same time the Political Agent at Mandalay was told by the King that Burmese 'guards' would be sent for the protection of Koontee at his own request. There was no doubt that the Burmese Government wanted to secure 'a commanding position' in Koontee's territory.

The decision arrived at by the Government of India was cautious and quite in keeping with Lord Dalhousie's policy. The Chief Commissioner was authorised to inform the Burmese Government that the British Government could not

allow the inclusion of the Western Karenne State in the Burmese dominions. The Governor-General could not violate the Secretary of State's injunction to 'abstain from any attempt to bring it within the sphere of our administrative institutions'. But it was 'advisable and also in keeping with the policy already prescribed' that the British Government should establish a peaceful influence in the country and assist the Chief of Western Karenne to bring his administration into fair order'. For this purpose the Chief Commissioner was directed to 'depute an officer and guard to Western Karenne with the chief's consent for the purpose of strengthening him and aiding him in working the forests in his territory'. Arrangements might be made to recover from him 'either in the shape of tribute or of timber or forest rights sufficient to cover the expenses of these measures'.

When this decision was communicated to the Government of Burma, Captain Strover was plainly told by the Burmese Ministers that the Western Karenne State was a portion of the Burmese dominions. The Chief Commissioner recommended that 'the King should be distinctly informed that any aggression on the part of the Burmese Government which might affect the independence of a state in direct relations with the British Government would be looked upon as an unfriendly act'. The Government of India refused to take so decisive a step, but authorised the Chief Commissioner to take measures for the establishment of 'peaceful influence' in Koontee's territory.

In 1874, Major Lloyd, Deputy Commissioner of Toungoo, paid a visit to the Western Karenne State.<sup>1</sup> He found the principality in a very 'disturbed and disorganised' condition. He ascribed this confusion to Burmese intrigue. The Chief Commissioner again urged upon the Government of India the imperative necessity of extending British authority in Koontee's territory. He observed, "Its occupation by the Burmese would effectually bar our communication with the Shan States, which at present afford a valuable market for our goods direct from Toungoo, but which, with Karenne closed, would have to draw their supplies from Mandalay, or through the Burman provinces north of Toungoo . . . . In a strategical point of view it is most undesirable that the Burmese should be permitted to push their way down the Salween and flank our frontier military station, Toungoo . . . ." He added, "Until the position assumed by our Government be recognised by the Court of Ava, there will be the danger of collision and disturbances between the local officials leading to misunderstandings of a more serious kind".

On March 26, 1874, Major Lloyd concluded a formal agreement with Koontee and his brother. Even after this the Burmese Ministers adhered to their former declaration. The Chief Commissioner thereupon remarked that 'some decisive action' should be taken regarding the matter, 'as the

<sup>1</sup> Major Lloyd's journal gives us many interesting details about the geography, resources and political condition of the Western Karenne State. See *Proceedings of the Political Department of the Government of India, A Branch*, September, 1874, No. 272.

Burmese Government showed great obstinacy and wrong-headedness'. An additional reason was now furnished for the occupation of Koontee's territory. The French occupation of Tonquin rendered it necessary that the Western Karenne route, 'which crossed the road between Cambodia and Burma, should be kept and improved'.

Even these repeated remonstrances of the Chief Commissioner failed to force an aggressive policy upon the Government of India. The agreement concluded by Major Lloyd was disapproved: "Independently of objections of detail which it is unnecessary to particularise the leading principle of that agreement is the transfer of the administration of the country to the British Government and this is so opposed to the policy of Government . . . that His Excellency in Council is surprised that Major Lloyd should have proposed to the Chiefs of Western Karenne to enter into any arrangement of the kind described in the agreement". The Chief Commissioner was asked to inform the Burmese Government that the Government of India would neither incorporate Koontee's territory within the British Empire nor allow the Burmese King to bring it under his control.

Although Lord Northbrook<sup>1</sup> was very anxious for an amicable settlement, he was prepared to take drastic measures if the Burmese seriously tried to assert their authority in the Western Karenne State. In September, 1874, it was brought to his notice that the Burmese Government had summoned Koontee to Mandalay and sent troops towards the Salween.

<sup>1</sup> Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1872-1876.

He at once ordered military preparations for preventing aggression and sent Sir Douglas Forsyth on a special mission to Mandalay. The Envoy succeeded in concluding an amicable agreement to the effect that the Western Karenne State "shall remain separate and independent, and that no sovereignty or governing authority of any description shall be claimed or exercised over that State". British surveyors then demarcated the boundary between the Western Karenne State and Upper Burma. The Burmese Government, though asked to co-operate, 'tacitly declined'. After this unsatisfactory solution<sup>1</sup> of the problem the Government of India, 'acting under the express direction of Her Majesty's Government, reserved to itself the right of prolonging the British boundary on its present line to the Salween river, should it ever appear desirable to do so'. Even after this the Western Karennees committed dacoities on the British frontier, and the Burmese Government indirectly troubled the British authorities by 'intrigues and encroachments'.

There were similar troubles about the Eastern Karenne State, lying between the Western Karenne State and the Salween river. In 1869 Tsanlanpan, Chief of this principality, went to Mandalay and took the oath of allegiance to the Burmese King. According to Captain Sladen, "this oath

<sup>1</sup> "This mission was denounced as a failure, and Sir Douglas Forsyth came in for some unfriendly criticism; but Sir Douglas printed for private circulation a succinct and really unanswerable account of his conduct during his journey to Burma, and of the proper execution of his mission." —*Times*, obituary notice of Sir Douglas Forsyth, quoted in Laurie's *Sketches of Distinguished Anglo-Indians*, 2nd Series, p. 262.

of allegiance did not altogether imply that Tsanlanpan had parted with his independence, so as to become for all purposes a Burmese subject; it rather signified a loose kind of subsidiary alliance, offensive and defensive, on the part of the Karenne Chief, by which he bound himself never to take up arms against the King, or side with the enemies of the Burmese Government". He apprehended, however, that "Eastern Karenne might be made use of, or subsidised into a means of serious aggression on our present north-eastern frontier of British Burma".

In 1873 the Burmese Government formally claimed that the Eastern Karenne State was a part of the Burmese dominions. In a letter to the Government of India the Chief Commissioner admitted that Tsanlanpan's oath gave 'some colour' to this claim. More decisive, perhaps, was the fact that in 1870 the Political Agent at Mandalay, under instructions from the Chief Commissioner, requested the Burmese Government to put a stop to depredations from the Eastern Karenne State on British borders and in this connection openly admitted that Tsanlanpan's territory was subject to the Burmese King. On that occasion the Burmese Ministers confessed that, although Tsanlanpan had acknowledged fealty to their King, 'they had not the power to coerce him if he should happen to be refractory'. Later on the Burmese Government decided 'to require the Chief of Eastern Karenne to admit his full subjection to the King'. For this purpose it 'appointed a former officer of Tsanlanpan, named Deepa, to the control of certain districts, doubtless within the terri-

tories of the Chief, and empowered him to use force in the assertion of his newly acquired rights'. Tsanlanpan could not be expected to surrender a part of his principality to a rebel officer<sup>1</sup>. So the step adopted by the Burmese Government was likely to lead to 'serious disturbances and party fighting' which would disorganise the teak trade and even expose the British frontier to irregular depredations. The Chief Commissioner thought that the 'active policy' adopted by the Burmese Government in the Karenne region was 'due to the new movements made in Western China and the possibility of territorial contact with another European Power there'. He concluded that "it was particularly advisable at the present time to resent promptly any step taken by the Burmese Government to push its frontier down the Salween river".

As time went on Deepa collected men and created disturbances. The Burmese Prime Minister admitted that Deepa 'had been invested with rank and power, and that in the nature of his duties he had full authority to maintain his position, by the use of force if necessary'. No direct answer was, however, given to the straight question whether the Burmese Government accepted responsibility for his acts. In January, 1874, the Government of India decided that it was not necessary at that time to make any representation on that subject to the Burmese Government. "Under present circumstances", wrote the Foreign Secretary, "our

<sup>1</sup> He was driven out of his stronghold at Thaya in 1871 for revolting against Tsanlanpan.

endeavours should be confined to the exercise of such influence as we may be able to bring to bear upon the local Chief with the view of preventing quarrels and protecting the lives and property of British traders there". But the Secretary of State expressed a different view. He wrote on April 17, 1874, "It seems to me that the Burmese Government should be informed that we cannot admit their claim to exercise any authority in that province, and that we shall expect them to act accordingly; but no further steps should be taken in that matter". Captain Strover was instructed accordingly. There was no further trouble, as the Burmese Government did not continue its policy of interference in the affairs of the Eastern Karenne State.

We have already seen that article 5 of the treaty of 1867 authorised the establishment of a Political Agent's Court at Mandalay. Captain Sladen was not in a hurry to bring this court into existence. He thought that "it required time, as well as much preliminary intercourse with the several members of the Burmese Government, to determine the details of the new court, more especially with reference to the settlement of certain anomalies in procedure which would have to be provided for in the trial of mixed suits". In March, 1869, he requested the Burmese Government to consider certain proposals framed by him, to appoint an officer to sit with him in the trial of mixed suits, and to lend him the services of a Burmese bailiff and six Burmese court peons<sup>1</sup>. He also

<sup>1</sup> He thought it unwise to serve his writs on either British or Burmese subjects "without the immediate aid and countenance of Burmese authorities."

had some interviews with the King. Captain Sladen's proposals were approved and Mr. Manook, who held the office of *Kullawon* (Magistrate over foreigners), was appointed to sit with him in the trial of mixed suits.

It was soon discovered, however, that the Ministers were not as conciliatory as the King. They were prepared to allow the Political Agent to try cases in his own house, but they were 'positively averse' to the establishment of a British Court in the King's dominions. They looked upon the establishment of such a court at the capital as a step directed against the absolute sovereignty of the King. Captain Sladen declared that 'unless the court could be established as a *court* and conducted with all the dignity and respect to which a British court was everywhere entitled', he would not consent to try cases at all. The King was as conciliatory as before, but he did not venture to overrule his Ministers. In course of negotiations and conferences Captain Sladen found that the real motive of the Ministers was 'to make the Political Agent's court subject and subservient in all respects to the courts of the country'. That position he steadily refused to accept. At last an agreement was concluded. The Burmese Government allowed the establishment of a British Political Agent's Court at Mandalay for the trial of all suits between registered British subjects. It was also agreed that a mixed court would be 'held for the trial of suits in which both British and Burmese subjects were involved. The Political Agent's court was formally opened on August 2, 1869.

The court generally worked well, but there were occa-

sional difficulties. Captain Strover found himself in an anomalous position in executing some decrees issued by the mixed court. The Burmese law did not admit of attachment of property; so British subjects considered themselves at a disadvantage in the mixed court. Mr. 'Manook's decisions in certain cases were not liked by one of the Queens; so he was transferred. His successor, a Burmese officer, was under the absolute control of the Ministers. Decrees remained unexecuted, and the Ministers tried 'to retard the efficient working of the mixed court'.

In this connection we may refer to the attitude adopted by the Government of Burma towards the extradition of British subjects who escaped to Burmese territory after committing crimes within British territory. Although the Ministers did not object to extradition in principle, they claimed that a British subject acquired Burmese nationality if he lived in Upper Burma for some years. Captain Strover argued that all persons resident at Lower Burma at the time of annexation were British subjects and they could not divest themselves of that character by 'an unsettled residence in a foreign state.' When the matter was referred to the Government Advocate at Rangoon, he observed that all persons who were resident at Lower Burma at the time of annexation reverted to Burmese nationality as soon as they returned to Upper Burma, while immigrants from Upper Burma who lived for some time in Lower Burma and returned to Burmese territory became subjects of the Burmese King. With this view the Chief Commissioner refused to agree. He thought

that all Burmese residents of Pegu became British subjects 'by conquest', although he agreed that 'some hardship' was involved in the case of the Burmese who at first settled in British territory and after a residence of some years went to Upper Burma. The Government of India decided that habitual residence should be considered as *prima facie* evidence of domicile. The burden of proof was to be imposed upon the person who asserted that he was not a subject of the country where his home was situated.

In Chapter VI we have given a detailed account of the measures adopted for the opening of commercial relations with Western China. By 1870 peace was concluded between the Pansees and the Chinese in Yunan. Several Khakyen chiefs visited Captain Strover, Assistant Political Agent at Bhamo, and gave him every facility he required. King Mindon continued his conciliatory policy. He told Major MacMahon, "I am most anxious that you shall be thoroughly convinced that it is my most earnest wish that trade be fostered in every way"<sup>1</sup>. Captain Strover visited the Khakyen hills and established friendly relations with the Chiefs.

On the question of frontier dacoities the Burmese Government adopted a conciliatory policy from 1872 onwards. During the years 1867-1872 about 112 Burmese subjects were accused of dacoity and other offences in British territory. Of these not a single man was arrested or punished. Early

<sup>1</sup> On June 7, 1870, Major MacMahon recorded in his Diary that the policy of the Burmese Government was 'one of obstruction, with a pretence of cordial co-operation.'

in 1872, however, a 'commencement' was 'made to arrest offenders' and the Political Agent was 'sanguine' that border crimes would decrease.

By article I of the treaty of 1867 King Mindon agreed to surrender his right of monopoly in all<sup>1</sup> articles except earth oil, timber and precious stones. This arrangement seriously affected his financial position. In July, 1873, the Political Agent at Mandalay reported that the King was 'in want of money'. Under these circumstances it was not unnatural for him to evade the obligation which he had almost unwillingly accepted. Moreover, the Burmese version of the treaty gave him some latitude in the matter. On August 15, 1881, the Chief Commissioner wrote to the Government of India, "The Burmese version of the treaty, which is to be treated as the original, is less clear against monopolies than the English version".

In 1871 the Political Agent at Mandalay suspected that the King intended to revive the monopoly system. He at once protested ; the King gave way<sup>1</sup>. The King tried his best to remove the suspicion that his intention was to obstruct commerce. He gave two entertainments at the palace to 'the European merchants at Mandalay and to the Mogul, Chinese and Shan traders'. The Chief Commissioner wrote

<sup>1</sup> The King's plan was to place 'the trade of his dominions, both imports and exports, in the hands of selected European merchants resident at Mandalay' and to pledge the guarantee of the Government 'for all payments.' The Chief Commissioner apprehended that 'these innovations' would 'press injuriously upon the interests of all petty traders, and seriously obstruct the rising commerce, not only with Upper Burma but with the countries beyond.'

to the Government of India, "On both these occasions he took the opportunity of attempting to justify those proceedings which have recently excited some alarm in respect to trade, and clearly he was apprehensive of what might be said and thought of his proceedings".

Yet financial stringency compelled the King to monopolise timber and his officers established a system of indirect monopoly all over his dominions. Captain Strover noted in his Diary on April 13, 1871, "It is clear that, notwithstanding what His Majesty may say to the contrary, a system of monopolies has been established all over the country. This is not the work of a few days, but has been in gradual progress for the past three or four months, drifting on and extending by degrees. His Majesty may be sincere in what he says: but it is certain that the district officials are completely monopolising produce for His Majesty, and it is unlikely that they would do this unless they had received orders on the subject". The Chief Commissioner regarded these reports as 'nothing more than rumours floating about the Mandalay bazars' and reminded the Agent that "any premature report of bazar rumours, without a previous attempt to sift them, to trace them to the source, and to obtain tangible *prima facie* proof of their truth, can only result in serious mischief, tending to involve unfortunate misunderstanding between the two Governments". It soon appeared, however, that the Agent's alarming reports were not groundless.

Lord Mayo<sup>1</sup> decided to visit Burma in order 'to make

<sup>1</sup> Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1869-1872.

himself acquainted on the spot with several questions of importance which had for a long time been continuously brought before him in correspondence, for the most part of a controversial character'. But his unfortunate death prevented the realisation of this object. Meanwhile British merchants submitted memorials to the Secretary of State, requesting him to take measures against the revival of the monopoly system in Upper Burma. The Secretary of State naturally referred the matter to the Government of India. In spite of the Political Agent's remonstrances the King did not give up his commercial pursuits. "In February, 1874, Captain Strover noted in his Diary, "His Majesty is buying up piece goods indirectly for retail sale in the new bazar at Mandalay". Mr. Harvey rightly observes that King Mindon 'possessed real business aptitude and would have made a successful broker'<sup>1</sup>.

The Government of India found it difficult to take formal exception to the King's procedure, for there was no open violation of treaty obligations. In a despatch from the Government of India to the Secretary of State, dated March 7, 1879, we find a lucid statement of the British point of view. The intention of the Government of India to abolish the monopoly system in Upper Burma was defeated, the Secretary of State was informed, "by the unjustifiable conduct of the late King,<sup>2</sup> who found means to evade fulfilling the

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge History of India, Vol. VI, p. 432.

<sup>2</sup> King Mindon.

object and substantial obligation of the treaty (of 1867) without any positive infraction of the letter. Although no articles other than those sanctioned by the treaty were declared to be royal monopolies, and although the King used to assert that every trader was at liberty to buy whatever he wanted, the fact really was that all purchases had to be made from the King himself, or from his authorised agents. The King was by far the largest dealer in produce in his dominions, and, until his requirements were fully met, none of his subjects were in a position to transact business with private traders. Further, in the case of goods imported from British Burma into Upper Burma, the Rangoon merchants complained that pressure was brought to bear upon the independent dealers to induce them to sell goods to the royal brokers, from whom alone the King's subjects were permitted to purchase what they required. The tendency of these measures has been to reduce the entire trade in the staple commodities passing between Upper and British Burma to a close monopoly in the hands of the King and of the few merchants able to deal with him on his own terms. Under this system private traders are practically shut out, or are liable at any time to be shut out, from the market, for they are unable, with any degree of certainty, either to dispose of their imports from British Burma at the remunerative rates, or to purchase raw produce for export from Upper Burma to Rangoon".

It was the 'shoe question' which finally brought about a breach between King Mindon and the Government of

India. It was customary for British officers, including the Chief Commissioner, to 'unshoe' at the steps of the audience hall whenever they were interviewed by the King. In 1876 the Government of India<sup>1</sup> suddenly decided that it was not dignified for a British representative to kneel unshod at court. The Burmese Government was requested to receive British officers in a manner suitable to their high rank and 'more in conformity with the manner in which the King's representative was received by the Viceroy'. It was pointed out that the Burmese Envoy, who had come to Calcutta to greet the Prince of Wales on the occasion of his visit to India, was received by the Viceroy with his hats and shoes and was permitted to sit on a chair 'in the same manner as His Excellency himself'. But King Mindon 'declined on his side to abate any part of the ceremonial procedure'. He declared that he would, if necessary, fight for ceremony although he had not fought for Pegu. The result was a stalemate. The Political Agent was no longer received by the King. This suspension of direct personal intercourse was naturally detrimental to British influence in the Burmese Court. The Government of India observed in a despatch to the Secretary of State, dated March 7, 1879, "With Governments in which, as in Upper Burma, the power of the monarch is absolute, the authority and consideration which a foreign Resident can command, and the effect of all diplomatic representations, depend almost entirely upon the

<sup>1</sup> The Governor-General was Lord Lytton (1876-1880.)

influence and arguments which he can bring to bear upon the King in person; and this renders the right of access to the King at Mandalay a point of cardinal importance. When the Resident is compelled to deal with the head of such a Government through the medium of subordinate agents, who are generally interested and untrustworthy, he finds that his endeavours to come to any real understanding are distorted and frustrated; while upon critical occasions he has no power of prompt and energetic interference".

## CHAPTER VIII

### FOREIGN POLICY OF KING MINDON (1869-78)

We have already referred to King Mindon's fond hope that he would be able to recover Pegu through the friendly intervention of the French Emperor. For the purpose of establishing personal contact with Napoleon III he sent an Embassy to Paris in 1867. The failure of that attempt to conciliate the French Government did not cool his zeal. During the last ten years of his life he persistently tried to open diplomatic relations not only with France but also with some other European and Asiatic powers.

A Burmese Mission arrived in Paris in 1872, and concluded a treaty with the French Government in January, 1873. It was nothing more than an ordinary commercial treaty, and ultimately it proved abortive. The British Ambassador in Paris secured a copy of the treaty as soon as it was concluded. It was ratified by the French Assembly in July, 1873. King Mindon built a house at Mandalay for the residence of the French Political Agent who was to be appointed under one of the clauses of the treaty. The British Political Agent noted in his Diary on July 19, 1873, "A French Colonel has arrived in Mandalay to enter the service of the King. His Majesty will before long have quite a retinue of foreigners in his service, doing nothing but attending at the palace for the purpose of procuring their salaries".

Meanwhile a French agent<sup>1</sup> named M. de Rochedouart, who had been sent to Mandalay merely to obtain the King's ratification for the above treaty, considered himself authorised to enter on fresh negotiations, and persuaded the King that he could secure better terms from the French Government. King Mindon unwisely refused to ratify the treaty mentioned above and prepared a new draft treaty, in which Rochedouart 'introduced some modifications of the old one in order to satisfy Burmese pride'<sup>2</sup>. A Burmese Envoy carried this draft to Paris in 1874. Rochedouart left Burma for Pekin in order to take charge of the French Legation there.

The French Foreign Minister refused to accept the new treaty and insisted on the ratification of the old one. The British Ambassador in Paris exerted his influence against the

<sup>1</sup> He was French Consul at Mandalay, 'in the pay of the French Government.'

<sup>2</sup> "The King holds out strongly against a mixed court, and seems to think that one court of this nature is quite sufficient. Consequently M. de Rochedouart has agreed to modify the matter, and will be content if it is stipulated that the French Agent is to be present in the Burmese court during the investigation of a civil suit between a French and a Burmese subject, and that no judgment is to be carried out unless the Consul agrees." The next point that Rochedouart is very sanguine about

is that the King will agree to take 5 per cent. customs dues on all French goods. This, if agreed to, would place British goods at a great disadvantage."—Political Agent's Diary, January 23, 1874.

A few days later Captain Strover noted, "It seems that the French wish to secure the mines of Upper Burma, or rather a stipulation that the mines can be worked by French Companies on payment of a royalty. The timber is also wanted, and various other things are talked about."

These statements seem to be unduly alarming when we compare them with Rochedouart's assurance to the Viceroy that his Mission to Burma was 'simply one of civility and for commercial purposes and had no political significance.'

Burmese. One of the additional clauses of the new treaty was to the effect that France would give her good offices to the Burmese Government on every occasion on which the latter should ask for them. The French Foreign Minister positively refused to accept this delicate responsibility. He told the British Ambassador: "not only would he declare that France had no right and no pretension to interfere in Burma, but that he would go further and admit distinctly that the vast possessions and immense interests of England made it proper and necessary that she should be vigilant respecting all Asiatic questions and should expect to exert a special influence over them". He gave a formal assurance to the effect that the new treaty would not be ratified by the French Government, although the Burmese Mission would be received with 'marked consideration and hospitality'.

The Burmese Envoy was officially received by the President of the Republic at the Elysee, but the Foreign Minister did nothing to conceal his anxiety that the unwelcome guest should leave Paris as soon as possible. The British Ambassador in Paris reported to London, "He (i.e., the French Foreign Minister), went on to say that his plan was to give the (Burmese) Ambassador no hope that the new articles would be ratified; and . . . to let him perceive that the French Government did not wish him to stay any longer at Paris. The Duke observed that he was the more desirous of getting rid of the Embassy, as he understood that it was very scantily

provided with money and he did not want to pay a hotel bill for it."

The Burmese Embassy left Paris in July, 1874. The French Foreign Minister evaded the Burmese Envoy by saying that he was at that time too busy with his Parliamentary duties to take the new proposals into consideration. He told the British Ambassador that three articles in the new treaty were 'extremely objectionable'. These were the articles stipulating that France should give her good offices to Burma whenever asked to do so; that jurisdiction over Frenchmen should be conceded to the Burmese tribunals; and that France should send officers to instruct the Burmese army. The only 'useful' article, from the French point of view, was that 'no higher customs duty than 5 per cent. *ad valorem* should be established'<sup>1</sup>. In September, 1874, the French Foreign Minister assured the British Ambassador that he 'regarded both the original and the supplementary treaty as virtually dead and buried without any prospect of resurrection'.

Meanwhile the French were slowly but steadily penetrating into Annam. It is unnecessary for our present purpose to give details about the condition of anarchy which compelled the King of Annam to throw himself upon the mercy of

<sup>1</sup> There were some differences between this version of the new treaty and the draft confidentially communicated by M. de Rochechouart to Captain Strover. For instance, the stipulation about the training of the Burmese army by French Officers did not appear in M. de Rochechouart's draft. It may have been added by the Burmese Ministers when they sent the draft to Paris.

the French. In 1874 he concluded two treaties with the French Government. The Under-Secretary of State for India remarked, "These treaties show that the King of Annam has fairly thrown himself into the arms of France; he may be said to have surrendered all real authority in both political and commercial matters to France". The effect on Burma of this new development in the history of the Far East was felt in the reign of King Mindon's successor.

King Mindon was not satisfied with negotiations with France alone. In 1869 a Roman Catholic priest named Father Abona served as intermediary between Burma and Italy. An Italian Envoy named Captain Racchia arrived at Mandalay and concluded a treaty in March, 1871.

As in the case of the French treaty, the British Ambassador in Italy tried to protect British interests in Burma by personal negotiations with the Italian Foreign Minister. The Italian Government 'expressed their readiness to consider any observations' which the British Government might offer on the Burmese proposals, and 'their wish to avoid anything to which they might take objection', although at the same time they 'trusted' that the conclusion of an Italo-Burman treaty 'might not be rendered impossible'. The British Ambassador objected specially to the clause regarding the importation of arms and ammunition into Burma<sup>1</sup>. He was told that Article XIV of the draft treaty was proposed by King Mindon himself,

<sup>1</sup> The Government of India "urged upon His Majesty's Government the necessity of restricting supply of arms to Burma."

declaring that he would conclude no treaty unless it was agreed to. Unable to persuade him to give up this attitude, Captain Racchia modified the Burmese draft by adding the words, "subject to . . . the non-infringement of International Law". His object was to render the article 'innocuous and of no effect'. Even then the Government of India wrote to the Secretary of State, "We consider that it would be most satisfactory that the Italian Government should, if possible, be moved to procure the erasure of the clause from the treaty. But if that be impossible, we would then suggest that a distinct understanding be come to with the Italian Government that the clause is to remain a dead letter, and that no request for permission to import arms into Burma will be preferred". This 'suggestion' was communicated by the Secretary of State to the British Ambassador in Italy. The repeated remonstrances of the British Ambassador did not go unheeded. Captain Racchia paid another visit to Mandalay and persuaded the King to allow certain modifications in the articles dealing with the import of arms into Burma and the trial of Italian criminals in Burmese courts.

In 1874 King Mindon wanted to send a Mission to Russia. The Emperor refused to receive it on the ground that 'there were no direct interests between Russia and Burma'. Moreover, he apprehended that the presence of a Burmese Envoy in St. Petersburg 'might awaken suspicion on the part of England'. That the Burmese King was interested in the activities of Russia is proved by his repeated enquiries about the Crimean War and the occupation of Khiva.

A Burmese Envoy visited Persia in 1874 and was received at Teheran by the Shah on August 29. The ceremonial was 'that granted to first class Missions'. No diplomatic or commercial treaty was concluded, nor any formal proposal discussed. Major MacMahon thought that the real motive of the Envoy was 'to ascertain all about the Central Asian question'.

In 1874 King Mindon received a Chinese 'Embassy'. When this matter was reported to the British Ambassador in Pekin, he wrote, "I should say that no mission of the character that we should term an Embassy to Burma has ever been contemplated by the Chinese Government. Burma figures in the list of its tributaries and as such is bound once in ten years to send a Mission to Pekin as tribute-bearers

any communications from China would be in the form of a command". He added that the leader of the Chinese 'Embassy' to Burma was a military<sup>1</sup> officer wearing a button of the fourth class. It was even possible that he was a mere servant, for "in rebellious times buttons even of a high class are given pretty freely to all who will either fight for the state or desert the rebel party".

King Mindon considered it beneath his dignity to enter into diplomatic relations with the Governor-General, whom he regarded as a mere officer of the Queen of England, and it was one of his fondest desires to conclude a treaty on terms

<sup>1</sup> " . . . in China the military are, in public estimation, immeasurably below the civilians."—*Political Proceedings of the Government of India, A Branch*, January, 1875, No. 171.

of equality with the Queen herself. With this end in view he sent an Envoy to London in 1872. The Chief Commissioner expressed the opinion that 'the Embassy may be really and literally confined at home to matters of ceremony, as otherwise its effects may prove most mischievous'. At the same time he informed the Burmese Prime Minister "that any mission which may be sent from the court of Mandalay to the court of Her Majesty Queen Victoria must be regarded solely as one of a ceremonial character". He added, "No diplomatic discussions or representations of a business character will be permitted by Her Majesty's Government, except through the Government of India, which must be addressed through the usual channel." King Mindon was not discouraged. He furnished his Envoy<sup>1</sup> with a letter to the Queen. The Chief Commissioner wanted a copy of this letter, but the Envoy refused to comply with his request. The Secretary of State telegraphed to the Viceroy, "Her Majesty's Government will not settle any business with Burma Mission without reference to Indian Government . . . All unnecessary offence will be avoided, but dignity of Viceregal Government maintained." The injured feelings of the Burmese Court were sought to be soothed by sending letters from the Queen and the Prime Minister (Gladstone). These letters were formally delivered to the King at Mandalay by Colonel Browne in April, 1872.

<sup>1</sup>The Envoy believed that, in spite of the Chief Commissioner's warning, he would be able to persuade the British Government to accept his point of view. He also spoke publicly of the probability of the cession of Bassein.

We have already referred to the strong objection raised by the Government of India to the arms and ammunition clause in the Italo-Burman treaty. As a matter of fact, the importation of arms into Burma through British territory was totally prohibited by that Government. In 1870 a French merchant living at Mandalay asked the Political Agent whether he would be allowed to import, through British Burma, 1,000 breech-loading muskets for the use of the Burmese army. Major MacMahon agreed to recommend his application to the Chief Commissioner. He thought that the importation of breech-loading muskets would not strengthen the Burmese army. He wrote in his Diary, ". . . in the event of a war the old muskets, which the Burmese know the use of, would really be a more formidable weapon in their hands than the breech-loaders in use with European nations, and these are useless without ammunition (which the Burmese cannot prepare), and in the hands of slovenly soldiers would soon be little better than clubs".

Unable to import arms from foreign countries, King Mindon employed European adventurers to cast guns and construct vessels. Major MacMahon was alarmed, but the Chief Commissioner took a saner view. He wrote to the Government of India, ". . . these proceedings are apparently only of importance so far as they may tend to encourage the King and his Ministers to undervalue the friendship of the British Government".

In 1871 King Mindon requested the Chief Commissioner to allow him to purchase Snider Rifles in British territory.

Major MacMahon recommended this application, but the Chief Commissioner rejected it<sup>1</sup>. The King based his demand on Article VIII. of the treaty of 1867, and a separate agreement signed by Colonel Fytche to the effect that the Government of India would not withhold its consent to the importation of arms and ammunition into Upper Burma as long as there was peace between the two Governments. In 1871 the Chief Commissioner refused to be bound by this subsidiary agreement, and King Mindon once more found himself helpless against the 'firmness' of the British Government.

During the last two years of his life (1876-78) King Mindon refrained from official intercourse with the British Agent at Mandalay but took no positive step likely to widen the breach between himself and the British authorities. His moderate temperament, as well as his long experience of British diplomacy, led him to adopt the policy of sitting on the fence. It was left for his unfortunate successor to give mortal offence to the British mercantile community and thereby to lose his throne.

<sup>1</sup> Major MacMahon thought that this was 'the sole cause of his recall.' But the Chief Commissioner reported to the Government of India 'that it was not alone the action which he pursued in dealing with the King's demands, but the general conduct of his political duties, and lamentable want of fitness, that excited the displeasure of the Government.'

## CHAPTER IX

### REIGN OF THIBAW (1878-1885)

In September, 1878, King Mindon lay seriously ill, and the Government of India apprehended that his death was likely to be followed by internal dissensions and a war of succession in Upper Burma. The Chief Commissioner of British Burma was authorised to take precautions 'for the protection of the Mandalay Residency and of British subjects, in the event of an outbreak in the capital.' The measures adopted by the Chief Commissioner excited alarm in Upper Burma, and the Burmese Government sent some troops southward 'in apprehension of interference on that frontier by the British Government.' Fortunately, however, no untoward incident took place. Thibaw, 'the youngest of the four principal sons of the King', was declared Heir-Apparent by the Burmese Ministers, and congratulated by the British Resident. This Prince was 'the only son of royal blood on both sides' and 'the favourite of his father.'<sup>1</sup> He was about twenty years

<sup>1</sup> Geary, a Bombay journalist who visited Upper Burma in 1886, says that Thibaw was reputed to be the son of a Buddhist monk. He was disgraced by King Mindon and compelled to wear a monk's dress. He owed his elevation to the throne to the intrigues of one of his step-mothers who expected that, as Thibaw had no party behind him, he would easily submit to her domination. A daughter of this Queen was married to Thibaw. During his reign Thibaw was dominated by his wife and mother-in-law, to whom popular rumour attributed the Massacre of the Kinsmen. (*Burma, After the Conquest*, pp. 125, 173, 174, 209-211. For a similar story, see *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. VI, p. 435.)

of age, and he had 'taken a high degree in examination.'<sup>1</sup> On October 1, authentic intelligence of King Mindon's death was received by the Resident. Thibaw's succession took place without opposition.<sup>2</sup>

A young Prince of 20, without any administrative experience or political training, was not likely to be able to proceed successfully through the web of British diplomacy. Lord Lytton,<sup>3</sup> remembered to this day as an uncompromising champion of 'Forward Policy' on the North-West, did not like to waste his opportunities in the North-East. As soon as he heard of the old King's death he telegraphically authorised the British Resident at Mandalay "to intimate to Ministers that general recognition and support of the Heir-Apparent by the Government of India will be proportioned in degree to his adoption of a new policy towards British

<sup>1</sup> Geary says that Thibaw was "very well educated for a Burmese Prince. He had passed three examinations." He was fond of reading in his leisure hours. His library was well stocked with valuable Pali manuscripts. He wanted to establish a University at Mandalay, at which English, French, German, and Italian were to be taught side by side with Burmese and Pali. (*Burma, After the Conquest*, pp. 174, 181, 328.)

<sup>2</sup> In a despatch to the Secretary of State, dated March 7, 1879, the Government of India gave a different version of the circumstances leading to Thibaw's accession. This version was based on the statements of the Nyoungyan Prince, one of Thibaw's step-brothers and disappointed rivals. He took refuge in the British Residency a few days before his father's death. He stated to the British Resident that he himself was likely to be chosen as Heir-Apparent, Thibaw being excluded on the ground of his doubtful paternity. He ascribed his exclusion from the succession to the intrigues of Thibaw's mother. The Government of India rightly pointed out that these statements 'must be accepted only as those of an informant personally interested in the matters to which they refer.'

<sup>3</sup> Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1876-1880.

Government, especially regarding free access to King, and greater consideration for position and influence of Resident." The implications of this new policy were more clearly explained in a letter to Lord Cranbrook, the Secretary of State, dated October 17, 1878. Arguing that "the opportunity afforded by the King's accession should give a favourable opportunity for improving our relations with his Government," Lord Lytton and his colleagues observed, "The interests of our Government in that country are mainly commercial, but they are of large and growing importance ; and they are affected by the insecurity of life and property which still prevails at Mandalay, by the difficulty and delays which are opposed to applications for injuries or redress, and by the disregard, on the part of the late King of Burmah, of existing treaties. Neither the grievances of British subjects in Upper Burmah, nor the evasion of public engagements, have hitherto been pressed to a formal issue with the Burmese Government; and we believe that the time has now come for adopting a different mode of dealing with such questions."

That Lord Lytton was determined to 'press to a formal issue' the grievances of British subjects in Upper Burma, was proved within a few days of the new King's accession. Sometime before the old King's death three British subjects, two *dhabies* (washermen) and an Englishman, were maltreated by Burmese officers. The Resident invited the attention of the Burmese Minister for Foreign Affairs to these incidents. Lord Lytton telegraphically instructed the Resident 'to press firmly for proper amends, and satisfactory assurances

for the future', and 'to intimate to Burmese Government that their reply and acts in this matter will be regarded as testing disposition of new King toward British Government.' The Burmese Government punished the officers concerned, and Lord Lytton observed that the redress was satisfactory. Another case occurred in November, 1878. A body of 200 armed men belonging to the Burmese Governor of Mingyan violently arrested 30 passengers from on board a steamer belonging to the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company, disregarding the Captain's demand for written warrants. Lord Lytton asked the Resident to declare that if immediate redress was not granted, "the British Government must act for the protection of British rights and subjects with entire disregard for interests of the new Government." The Resident wrote to the Burmese Minister for Foreign Affairs about the incident. In reply the Minister argued that the passengers were legally arrested, and requested the Resident to punish the Captain for carrying away 'the Royal-money-bought servants.' The Resident reiterated his demand for redress and stated that "the Captain is not blameable, nor was any complaint made to the Resident against him at the time, and therefore he cannot be punished." The available documents do not indicate what redress, if any, the Resident was ultimately able to secure. In a lengthy despatch to the Secretary of State, dated March 7, 1879, the Government of India observed, "There is strong reason to believe that it has always been the deliberate intention, as it has undoubtedly been the political effect, of such delays (in granting redress to injured British subjects) to exhibit the

King of Upper Burma to his own subjects as a sovereign strong enough to inflict indignity and damage upon British subjects without any fear of consequences injurious to himself. This spirit of bravado has been conspicuously manifested by the Court of Mandalay in the conduct of all its relations with the British Government for many years past. We, therefore, submit to your Lordship our opinion that the time is now come when the indulgence of this spirit should be effectually checked. If the Burmese Government persists in subjecting British subjects, whether Europeans or Natives, to barbarous laws, one remedy may possibly be found in the enforcement of extra-territorial rights for all British subjects in Burmah, and the establishment of British Courts for the administration of justice in all cases which affect British subjects . . . However willing we may be to avoid interference with the jurisdiction of the Burmese Government, our duty to our subjects is paramount."

Before this question could be finally settled, the Government of India received official reports from the Resident at Mandalay to the effect that the "late King's sons, with mothers, wives, and children", had been slaughtered in prison by order of the new King. Lord Lytton at once ordered the Resident "to deliver to King forcible remonstrance against these barbarities, and to intimate that such conduct raises question of British Resident remaining at Capital." The Secretary of State approved the remonstrance, but added that the withdrawal of the Resident 'might give further scope to his cruelty and bad government.' About 32 persons were murdered, and

emissaries were sent to Calcutta to murder the Nyoungyan Prince, Thibaw's step-brother and rival, who was living there under British protection.<sup>1</sup> The Government of India considered it necessary to take measures for the protection of British subjects in Upper Burma. Orders were issued for reinforcing the garrisons in British Burma.

On March 7, 1879, the Government of India sent an exhaustive despatch to the Secretary of State. After referring, in outline, to the main aspects of British relations with Burma since 1826, the Government of India enumerated the outstanding commercial and political questions which demanded immediate attention. With regard to commerce it was pointed out that "either the treaty engagements of the British Government with Burmah ought to be revised, or the King shall be brought to deal with those engagements according to their manifest meaning and intention." Of the political questions three demanded serious consideration—"the disparity between the laws and official usages of British India and those of Upper Burmah, so far as this disparity concerns British subjects under Burmese jurisdiction"; the ceremonial which required the British Residents and Envoys to take off

<sup>1</sup> The Nyoungyan Prince, as we have said, had fled to the British Residency at Mandalay on the eve of King Mindon's death. After Thibaw's accession the Burmese Ministers requested the Resident to surrender him; on his refusal to do so, they requested that he, along with another Prince living in the Residency, "might be removed into British territory, representing the danger and disturbance to which the throne of the new Sovereign might be exposed from their presence in or near Upper Burmah." The Princes were thereupon removed to Calcutta, where they lived "at the expense, and under the protection, of the British Government."

their shoes and to sit before the King of Burma upon the floor ; and the position of the Karenne States. Although the Government of India had requested the Burmese Government to receive British Envoys in a manner suitable to their high rank, and 'more in conformity with the manner in which the King's representative was received by the Viceroy,'<sup>1</sup> the King 'declined on his side to abate any part of the ceremonial procedure.' The question was held in abeyance, for the Resident had never since been received by the King. This suspension of direct personal intercourse, the Government of India pointed out, had been materially detrimental to British influence at the Court : "With Governments in which, as in Upper Burmah, the power of the monarch is absolute, the authority and consideration which a foreign Resident can command, and the effect of all diplomatic representations, depend almost entirely upon the influence and arguments which he can bring to bear upon the King in person ; and this renders the right of access to the King at Mandalay a point of cardinal importance. When the Resident is compelled to deal with the head of such a Government through the medium of subordinate agents, who are generally interested and untrustworthy, he finds that his endeavours to come to any real understanding are distorted and frustrated ; while upon critical occasions he has no power of prompt and

<sup>1</sup> When the Prince of Wales came to India (1876) an Envoy came from Mandalay to greet him. He was received by the Viceroy with hats and shoes, and was permitted to sit on a chair 'in the same manner as His Excellency himself.'

energetic interference." The Government of India had expected that all these difficulties would be removed after the old King's death ; but "as yet nothing has occurred, either to justify the expectation of spontaneous and sincere overtures from the Government of the present King for the improvement of its relations with the Government of India, or to render any such overtures on our part consistent with the sentiment inspired by the sanguinary acts with which His Majesty has inaugurated his reign."

After this despatch had been sent, detailed information about the massacre reached Calcutta. The following extract from the confidential diary of the Resident at Mandalay, dated February 19, 1879, gives a vivid account of the tragedy : " . . . . on Saturday night (February 15, 1879) the removal of the political prisoners to the jail (which had been cleared for them) commenced. Some were killed on that night and the rest on the two succeeding nights. A large hole had been dug in the jail precincts. Into this their bodies were thrown. Touching tales are told of how the women and children pleaded for their lives in vain. Their outcries were stifled by the hands of the executioners grasping their necks till they were strangled. Others were killed with bludgeons, which in the hands of half-drunken men often required to be used repeatedly before the victims were put out of their pain. The executioners were some of the worst ruffians released for the purpose from the jail which was now the scene of their cruelties . . . On Sunday night (the 16th) eight cart-loads of the bodies of the Princes of the blood are said to have

been conveyed out of the city by the western (or funeral) gate, and thrown into the river according to the custom. The other bodies were all thrown into the hole already dug in the jail. No conspiracy or other provocation to such a deed has been reported. The present Ministers are said to have tried to dissuade the King, but in vain . . . . The King's mother is said to have urged the King to it, but chiefly a violent military Chief lately promoted to be an Atwen Wun or Privy Councillor, and a great favourite of the King." On the next day, February 20, the Resident noted in his diary : "Infants were taken from their mothers' arms and their brains were dashed out against the wall. Others were struck on the head and thrown only half-dead on to the heap of bodies in the pit. The Queens and Princesses were stripped in order to search their clothes for secreted jewels. Some, it is said, were dishonoured before being killed, though this is perhaps untrue. All was effected under the superintendence of the personal followers of the King. No official of the Hluttaw or Ministers' Court was present."

In his reply to the Resident's letter of remonstrance the Burmese Foreign Minister asserted the customary right of the King of Burma, as an independent Sovereign, "to take such measures to prevent disturbance in his country as might be desirable, without regard to the blame of others."<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> For other instances of the "Massacre of the Kinsmen," see Harvey's *History of Burma*, pp. 75, 80, 117, 120, 145, 201, 265. Harvey says (p. 338) that the massacre of 1878 "probably differed from its forerunners neither in extent nor horror but only in taking place in the full light of modern publicity."

Resident again wrote to the Minister, asking the King to save the lives of "the Queens and Princesses, the widows and female relatives and others, the servants of His late Majesty, . . . and the relatives and servants also of His Majesty the present King." He also requested the Minister to hand over to him "any such from whom disturbance to the State may be feared," and agreed to 'convey them out of reach of harm-doing'. The Minister replied, "It is not desired to clear away (*i.e.*, to kill) and keep-by (*i.e.*, imprison) those who it is not feared would cause any disturbance to the country, but the wish towards them is that they may live happily and contentedly."<sup>1</sup>

Behind this apparently friendly exchange of letters a conspiracy was probably being organised to attack the Resident. The Resident got scent of it and reported the matter to the Chief Commissioner, who communicated with Calcutta. As a result, the Viceroy authorised the Resident to withdraw from Mandalay, taking assistants and guard, whenever he thought this course expedient for his personal safety.

When everything was thus in the melting pot, the Government of India received from the Secretary of State a reply to its dispatch of March 7. Lord Cranbrook expressed the view that no change of policy could with advantage be introduced

<sup>1</sup> The following justification of the Massacre, offered after the annexation by a Burmese officer to an English Commissioner, deserves notice: "We had no alternative. It has taken you English five years to crush dacoits led by a few sham Princes. How long would it have taken you if it had been led by seventy real Princes? That was the risk we had to face, and we had none of your resources. By taking those seventy lives we saved seventy thousand." (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. VI, p. 435.)

at that moment. He wrote, ". . . the grievances which we have tolerated from former rulers of Burmah have not been aggravated as yet by the present King, and . . . no action has been taken on his part which calls for a distinct change of policy on ours . . . I am of opinion that the time for such a decided intimation of policy as you contemplate would not be well chosen while the young prince is in the first excitement of the possession of unbridled power, and surrounded by the worst class of counsellors . . . Anything like an ultimatum based upon former grievances would at the present juncture appear to Her Majesty's Government highly impolitic, and calculated to give the impression that your Excellency's Government are seeking hostilities rather than more friendly relations."

Meanwhile matters were heading towards a crisis at Mandalay. The mother and sister of the Nyaungyan Prince were being tortured in prison. Some other members of the royal family were killed. The Assistant Resident was insulted in the streets. The common people adopted a hostile tone towards Englishmen in general. The King collected troops and indulged in "warlike and blustering talk." Towards the close of February, 1879, a camp was established by the King outside the capital city, field manœuvres were held, and the garrisons of the river forts were strengthened. Seven Shan Chiefs were asked to supply levies. The troops were given an advance of a month's pay, and armed with rifles from the palace. The infuriated party in power desired a rupture with the British Government. The King further offended

the British authorities by claiming sovereignty over the Eastern Karenne State. British subjects were systematically ill-treated. "When a Burman was the claimant against a British subject, the Burmese Government interfered, regardless of the Treaty which gave jurisdiction in such cases to the Mixed Court, to detain and attach the latter's property, while if a British subject were the claimant, even under a decree of the Mixed Court, they refused to allow his Burmese debtor's property to be attached, and even allowed the latter, contrary to right, to give a merely formal security and to go at large." Indians who had been permitted to occupy some land by the late King, and who had built houses and established themselves there at their own expense, were turned out ; their houses were made over to some Burmans, and they received neither compensation nor permission to remove the materials of the houses.

We have already referred to the reinforcement of the garrisons in British Burma. The "continuance of a very precarious condition of affairs at Mandalay" compelled the Chief Commissioner to write to the Government of India that he could not "advise the reduction of the strength of the garrison in this country by a single man, or the relaxation of our vigilance in the smallest degree." The Resident deprecated any too plain and sudden measure of demobilization, but recommended that the steamers and flats collected for the transport of troops might be withdrawn in an inconspicuous manner.

The policy of maintaining troops near the frontier,

without employing them for any specific purpose, was criticised by the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce on the ground that it created a panic and led to serious depression in trade between Upper and Lower Burma. With this contention the Chief Commissioner did not agree ; he thought that the depression was due, not to the reinforcement of the garrison, but to the political turmoil at Mandalay. He observed, "Mandalay may be said to be the pivot on which the trade usually turns. If there are no disturbing elements at Mandalay, everything works smoothly, but if there is the slightest derangement the merchants refuse to send goods up country except for cash payment. Credit is stopped and commerce is immediately depressed in consequence."

The instructions contained in the London despatch of April 3, 1879, compelled the Government of India to adopt a cautious and conciliatory attitude towards Burma. Although the Chief Commissioner recommended that immediate explanation should be demanded from the Court of Mandalay of "those military preparations which have depressed the trade and alarmed the commercial community of British Burmah," the Viceroy felt that such a demand, followed, if necessary, by the formal recall of the Resident, would only increase; rather than diminish, the commercial embarrassments complained of by the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce. Nor was the Viceroy convinced that "the Mandalay Government actually contemplates such a suicidal proceeding as an unprovoked attack upon British territory, or any serious insult or aggression, on a Government well

known to be fully prepared not only to protect its possessions but also to inflict severe punishment on such an assailant." On the other hand, the reports of the Resident at Mandalay proved that the Burmese Ministers were "sedulously avoiding any act likely to give us serious offence," that "they have a profound distrust of the declarations made to them that our military movements were strictly defensive and precautionary," and that "while preparing for the event of a collision, they have no inclination to provoke it."<sup>1</sup> In repudiating the Chief Commissioner's argument that it was "impossible to remain indifferent to the King's disregard of public remonstrances elicited from the British Government by his barbarities," the Government of India observed, "the exposure of the lives of Her Majesty's subjects in an unprovoked war with the King of Burmah would not be justified by the fact that this Prince, whilst at peace with the British Government, has barbarously taken the lives of his own subjects or relatives. The British Government is not called upon to redress every wrong, or punish every misdeed, of which it has expressed abhorrence."

On June 15, 1879, R. B. Shaw, the British Resident in Upper Burma, died at Mandalay, and Colonel H. A. Browne,<sup>2</sup> a high official with long experience of Burmese affairs, was

<sup>1</sup> Late in June, 1879, the Resident wrote, "Military display and bluster seem to be confined exclusively to the capital, and as long as the First Minister retains control of the armed force, I don't think much harm will be done. But if the Palace party could oust the First Minister, as they no doubt would like to do, the danger will be great".

<sup>2</sup> He was at that time Commissioner of Pegu.

appointed to take up temporarily the duties of the Residency. This unexpected vacancy in the office placed the question of withdrawing the Resident before the Government of India 'under a new aspect,' and the opinions of the Resident and the Chief Commissioner were invited. Colonel Browne was in favour of leaving the office temporarily vacant, a junior officer being retained to carry on routine business. He thought that such a decisive step as the total withdrawal of the Residency might precipitate a domestic crisis in Upper Burma. On the other hand, he said that "the retention of a high official here as Resident has anything but a good effect upon our prestige. It does not improve our position in the eyes of the people, for instance, to allow them to see me, a well-known official in British Burmah, and considered of some importance by our own subjects, reduced to a mere cipher under the shadow of the Golden Foot, in absolute confinement as regards communication with other people, (not a single respectable non-official being allowed to approach me,) living in a compound surrounded by Burman guards and spies, and unable to obtain any information of what is going on around me,<sup>1</sup> except in a roundabout and unsatisfactory manner, and generally quite unable to obtain any redress for British subjects." The Chief Commissioner recorded the opinion that "no successor to Mr. Shaw should be appointed unless, and until, we receive from

<sup>1</sup> In another letter Colonel Browne observed, "The object now is apparently to isolate the Resident, as was done in King Tharrawaddy's time, when they shut him up on an island so that he could communicate with no one."

the Burmese Government satisfactory assurances of a change of attitude on their part and of their consent to a revision of our general relations with them." The Government of India accepted Colonel Browne's view. Colonel Browne was asked to leave Mandalay at an early opportunity, leaving Mr. St. Barbe "to transact ordinary business with the Burmese officials upon the footing to which the intercourse between the Residency and the Ministers has now been reduced." Accordingly Colonel Browne left Mandalay on August 29. Before his departure he refrained from saying or doing anything likely to arouse the hostility of the Burmese Government. His departure was attended by no demonstration or notice whatever on the part of the Burmese.

Early in September, 1879, the news of 'the late catastrophe at Kabul'<sup>1</sup> was received by the Government of India, and it was apprehended that "this intelligence, as soon as it should be publicly known at Mandalay, might to a certain degree affect the situation of British officers at that place, and add to the uncertainty of their position." The Chief Commissioner was authorised to take any steps he might consider necessary for the personal safety of the officers and escort of the Residency, and even to 'withdraw the whole Mandalay Agency and escort whenever he should deem this step advisable on account of insecurity at Mandalay.' The Chief Commissioner thought that "protective measures would be futile; for any attempt to send the G. I. steamer 'Irrawaddy' or a larger guard

<sup>1</sup> Murder of Sir Louis Cavagnari by the Afghans, which occurred on September 3.

to Mandalay, the only practicable steps possible, would be the certain signal for the seizure of the British officers at Mandalay, and that the passage of the steamer and escort would be forcibly resisted." He, therefore, authorised Mr. St. Barbe to leave Mandalay at his discretion. He wrote to the Government of India : "All recent reports from Mandalay agree in representing the position of the British officers there as precarious. The temper of the people at Mandalay is said to be insolent and aggressive, and significant intentions of its tendencies are afforded by circumstances which have lately occurred, such as a mob following Mr. St. Barbe to the Residency gates, the ill-treatment of the clerk of the Bhamo Agency, the cruel and wanton putting to death of a British subject, a native of India, and the gross and unprovoked assault committed on the Residency Surgeon." Colonel Browne observed, "There seems no doubt that . . . the whole power of the State is being gradually monopolized by the brutalized and hardly rational human animals who form the palace party. It is about as easy to calculate what will happen on the downfall of the Foreign Minister as it would be to foretell the several courses likely to be pursued by a number of savage animals in a menagerie if the bars of their cages and their keepers were suddenly removed. Perhaps they might attack one another. Perhaps they might select other victims. There can be no doubt, however, but that on such a contingency occurring, the occupants of the British Residency would be in a very considerable danger." On receiving this letter the Government of India decided that "the whole Residency officers, staff and

escort, must be withdrawn" as soon as necessary preparations were made for their removal. Accordingly, Mr. St. Barbe left Mandalay on October 6, taking with him all American and English residents<sup>1</sup> of the city. No opposition or obstruction was offered by the Burmese Government or people. The "very creditable judgment and self-possession" shown by Mr. St. Barbe earned the praise of the Government of India.

After the departure of the British officers from Mandalay the King sent an Envoy to the Viceroy. In his letter to the Viceroy the King complained that the officers left the city "without any special reason, suddenly and precipitately," thereby causing depression of trade, and expressed his anxiety to maintain friendly relations with the British Government. The Envoy, however, was not authorised to enter into a new treaty. He was received with due courtesy and ceremony at Thayet-myo (on the frontier between Upper Burma and British Burma) by the Deputy Commissioner, and detained there pending instructions from the Government of India. The Chief Commissioner submitted to the Government of India that "a ceremonial embassy, such as that now sent, which is furnished with no powers, and which quietly assumes that the King is the injured party, and that the British Government has nothing to complain of, is quite out of the place, and its reception would be detrimental to our interests." With this view the Government fully agreed. The following instructions were, accordingly, sent to the Chief Commissioner : "He

<sup>1</sup> The French and Italians preferred to stay.

(*i.e.*, the Envoy) may be informed, briefly and generally, that the Viceroy of India has been seriously dissatisfied with the position and treatment of the British Resident at Mandalay, which have been altogether inconsistent with professions of friendship and with the exchange of diplomatic courtesies. In such circumstances . . . it appears at least incongruous and premature to send to Calcutta a complimentary mission, or to assume that the mission can be received in a friendly and honourable manner in Calcutta by the Government of India, whose representative has been treated with habitual courtesy at Mandalay."

Even after the departure of the Envoy no positive evidence was afforded by the court at Mandalay to prove its sincerity. Executions were continued with unabated cruelty. Rifles and torpedoes were built in secret. Fortifications were erected opposite Minhla. On November 13, 1879, a riotous assault was made by Burmese subjects on the crew of a British steamer in the Irrawaddy. No redress was obtained from the Burmese Ministers. The Government of India observed, "It is, in our opinion, beyond question that an unprovoked attack of this serious nature upon a British vessel in Burmese waters renders necessary a demand for reparation and for the punishment of the offenders. The Burmese Government is not only responsible for such acts according to the general usage of nations, but it is also bound by treaty to afford protection to British subjects within Burmese territory." The Chief Commissioner was asked to submit his views about the probable

effects of "declaring treaties void and revising fiscal arrangements exclusively in British interests" and also about "the practicability of establishing blockade of food supply by prohibiting all exports from British Burmah." The Chief Commissioner reported that the dissolution of the treaties of 1862 and 1867 would lead to a serious disorganisation of trade, which "would probably be accepted if it were understood to end in a final adjustment of the political question." He doubted whether the revision of fiscal arrangements would inflict more injury on British trade than "the capricious interference of the late King and . . . . the evasions of the treaties so justly complained of during" the present reign. He did not recommend the prohibition of exports except as a temporary expedient.' On January 14, 1880, the Government of India wrote to the Secretary of State that, unless adequate redress was obtained, the treaties should be declared void : "The treaties are as a whole much more advantageous to Upper Burmah than to our own provinces, for they were made chiefly with the object on our part of encouraging and opening out commercial intercourse between the two neighbouring States, and in the hope of permanently establishing our trade relations upon an amicable and liberal footing. It does not appear to conduce either to the advantage of our own trade, or to the dignity of our Government, that we should continue, at any sacrifice of our own interests, to be bound by these obligations to a state which in no way appreciates our liberality, or reciprocates the good faith with which we have observed our engagements." The policy of de-

nouncing the treaties, however, did not find favour with the Secretary of State.

Meanwhile the Burmese Envoy, who was waiting at Thayet-myo<sup>1</sup> for further instructions from Mandalay, was authorised by the King to discuss preliminaries for a new treaty. He opened communications with the Chief Commissioner and sent to him a rough sketch containing his proposals. From the British point of view the following proposals were specially open to objection : (1) The plenipotentiary of each to have jurisdiction in civil suits between subjects of his own Government residing in the territories of the other. (2) The subjects of each party residing in the territories of the other to be subject to the territorial criminal law and jurisdiction. (3) Mutual surrender of political offenders. (4) Imposition of heavy charges on merchant vessels entering or leaving Upper Burma. (5) Burmese Government to have right to procure unlimited war material. The Chief Commissioner considered that "there would be no advantage in discussing with the Embassy the terms of this draft treaty", because it "not only contains a number of points already sufficiently provided for in the existing treaties, but introduces several new Articles advancing proposals which cannot possibly be agreed to." Moreover, the Envoys made no reference to the position and treatment of the British Resident at Mandalay and the diplomatic privileges he was entitled to. He requested the Envoy to return to Upper Burma, on the ground that his "sojourn at Thayet-myo for an indefinitely protracted time, and without any proposals

likely to be acceptable, is inconvenient". His views received the full approval of the Government of India.

Still the Burmese Envoy waited at Thayet-myo. Early in April, 1880, he was invested with plenary powers to conclude a new treaty, and expressed the desire to meet the Chief Commissioner at Rangoon. He was asked to specify in detail the matters which he wanted to discuss. He replied that without personal consultation communications could not be "complete and definite." The Chief Commissioner wrote in reply that, unless the Envoy was "prepared to submit substantial overtures," he should return to Mandalay. The Envoy left Thayet-myo on June 2. "Before leaving Thayet-myo he gave to the Deputy Commissioner of Thayet-myo for transmission to the Chief Commissioner, a letter which not only showed no appreciation of the cause of our dissatisfaction with the Burmese Government, but returned to the position regarding the withdrawal of the Resident from Mandalay which has been taken up by the Burmese Government from the first. This letter was so improper, both in tone and in matter, that the Chief Commissioner declined to receive it."

Meanwhile the case of the assault on the crew had come to the front again. The Burmese authorities imposed a fine of Rs. 100 on the culprits, and two Burmese *coolies* received 'trifling chastisement'. When the Chief Commissioner complained to the Burmese Foreign Minister, the latter replied that the case had been decided by the local magistrate, that both parties had been satisfied, and that it was not the custom, in cases thus settled, to take further proceedings.

The Government of India regarded this reply as ‘unsatisfactory, both in tone and substance’, and requested the Secretary of State<sup>1</sup> to authorise the cancellation of the existing treaties.

Lord Kipon assumed charge of the Viceroyalty of India on June 8, 1880, and took up the Burmese question at once. On May 27 and 28 the British mail steamer “Yunan” was forcibly detained by Burmese officials near Minhlā and an armed force was put on board. The Chief Commissioner reported the matter to the Burmese Foreign Minister and asked him to explain the conduct of the Burmese officials concerned. The reply of the Minister, according to the Chief Commissioner, “stated the facts incorrectly, and practically furnished no explanation whatever”. But the Burmese authorities dismissed the Governor in whose jurisdiction the incident had occurred, and issued orders to their officials not to interfere with the British steamers. On receiving the Chief Commissioner’s report the Government of India wrote to the Secretary of State on November 9, 1880, “We are of opinion that we should be justified by the misconduct of the Burmese in withdrawing from engagements the maintenance of which is no longer either binding upon us or advantageous to our interests; and we desire again to request from Her Majesty’s Government authority to withdraw from these engagements ”

<sup>1</sup> Viscount Cranbrook had resigned on the fall of Disraeli’s Second Government in 1880, and the Marquis of Hartington had accepted the India Office in Gladstone’s Second Government.

In July, 1880, Mr. Aitchison<sup>1</sup> left Burma to join the Viceroy's Executive Council, and Mr. Bernard became officiating Chief Commissioner at Rangoon. Mr. Bernard found that "the position is very like stalemate. We can hardly begin advances, with any hope that the King and his Ministers will make, save at the point of the bayonet, the concessions we require about the Resident's position. At the same time, the Mandalay Government can hardly move after their rebuff of last spring. I think the aim would be clearer if we could announce in some way precisely what we should require as preliminaries to discussion." He suggested that a Consular Agent, inferior in status to a Resident, might be sent to Mandalay to look after British commercial interests. In reply "to his enquiry the Government of India laid down four preliminary conditions : the British Resident must be received at Mandalay 'in a manner as impressive as the withdrawal of the last was unceremonious'; the Burmese Government must assign a proper and convenient site for the Residency; the Resident must be received by the King 'in the ordinary dress of a political officer'; and the recurrence of bloodshed in the capital must cease. The Chief Commissioner, however, was requested not to make any announcement except in reply to overtures or enquiries on the part of the Burmese Court. The plan of appointing a Consular Agent at Mandalay was not approved, because it might afford the Burmese "a pretext for permanently lowering the footing upon which our Agent could claim to be treated."

<sup>1</sup> Chief Commissioner.

In a despatch dated January 13, 1881, the Secretary of State approved the first three preliminary conditions, and added, "I cannot, however, regard as essential the further condition . .in connexion with the massacres It will be quite right, in the course of negotiation, that every effort should be made to obtain the release of the unfortunate persons still confined at Mandalay . but the question touches so closely the position of the King as an independent sovereign, and is so likely to be treated by him as of purely domestic concern, that concession of the point as a condition preliminary to negotiation can hardly be expected, while it is even less probable that a formal treaty stipulation in the sense desired would be agreed to While professing to bind the King's heirs and successors, its validity, in practice, could not be relied upon." The request for authority to withdraw from treaty engagements was not granted. Her Majesty's Government could not regard either the assault on the crew or the "Yunan" incident "as of sufficient gravity to warrant a measure the effect of which must be, as it seems to them, to destroy all prospect of improved relations with Burmah, whether political or commercial." The Government of India was asked to 'maintain for the present the attitude of forbearance lately observed towards the King.'

Unfortunately, the Court of Mandalay became gradually less and less conciliatory in its attitude to the British Government. In February, 1881, representations were made by the Chief Commissioner concerning the establishment of a monopoly in the jaggery trade, but the Burmese Foreign

Minister replied on April 26 that "nothing had been done to depress trade, and that nothing had been done inconsistent with the Treaty." As a matter of fact, however, the Ministers were deliberately reviving the old policy of granting monopolies.<sup>1</sup> In July, 1881, information was received by the Chief Commissioner "to the effect that the monopoly in the trade of cotton in the dominions of His Majesty the King of Ava has been disposed of to two natives of Burma in consideration of an annual payment to the Royal Exchequer, and that the monopoly of the trade in salt and in cutch is shortly to be sold in the same manner." The Chief Commissioner regarded these monopolies as constituting an infringement of the treaty of 1867 and reported to the Government of India: "If a regular system of monopolies should be adopted by King Thibaw's Government, the results to our trade with Upper Burma might be serious." He proposed to send to Mandalay "a temperate remonstrance on the subject" and enclosed a draft letter for the approval of the Government. In that letter the Chief Commissioner remarked that the establishment of monopolies was 'calculated to inflict great injury on the trade carried on between Burmese and British territory', and requested the Burmese Foreign Minister not to alter previous practice. The

<sup>1</sup> This policy was not altogether given up even after the conclusion of the treaty of 1867. During the last years of Mindon's reign monopolies were occasionally granted; but upon representation being made, the monopolies were usually modified. During the first two years of Thibaw's reign "there were no monopolies, trade was unrestricted, and the commerce between the two countries increased greatly."

language is really temperate; there is no aggressive reference to treaty rights.

While the matter was awaiting the consideration of the Government of India, the Chief Commissioner received letters of remonstrance from the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company, the Chamber of Commerce, and some "Chinese, native, and other merchants and traders." The Manager of the above Company wrote to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner on July 29, 1881, that as a result of the revival of monopolies "we have already suffered serious inconvenience and loss in our traffic by having to unship cargo under threats of its being seized at the frontier, and thereby having our steamers delayed and losing freight on the shipments; and we foresee that much more serious loss and damage to our traffic is inevitable in the future, since the Native merchants trading in Upper Burma cannot carry on their traffic with British Burma so long as they have not freedom to buy, export, and import those articles of produce which are supplied by each country to the other." On July 27, a large number of "Chinese, native, and other merchants and traders" requested the Manager of the above Company to inform the Government that "so long as this state of matters continues, it will be impossible for us to do business in Upper Burma, and that already many of us have decided to close our establishments there." The Rangoon Chamber of Commerce requested the Chief Commissioner to take necessary measures "to induce the Burmese Government to

carry out the provisions of the existing Treaties."<sup>1</sup> The diary<sup>2</sup> of a travelling Customs Preventive Officer contained the following remarks: "The merchants at the different stations are great sufferers by these arrangements, for not only do the Government grant a monopoly to affect a certain article of commerce in the future, but they allow the terms of each to be such that any produce in the hands of merchants is liable to be seized without due notice A good many Chinese and other merchants and traders declare that should there be no change for the better shortly, many of them have made up their minds to quit the country."

In forwarding these complaints to the Government of India, the Chief Commissioner remarked that the revival of monopolies would seriously injure not only the commercial community, but the people at large. He was, however, not quite sure whether he could appeal to the treaty of 1867 in justification of his claim for the abolition of the monopolies. He said, ". . . it may be contended (by the Burmese) that the restriction imposed on monopolies by Article 1 of the treaty ceased with the expiry of ten years<sup>3</sup> from 15th April, 1867. The Burmese version of the treaty, which is to be treated as the original, is less clear against monopolies than the English version. But, as yet, in correspondence about mono-

<sup>1</sup> Letter dated July 28, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> Under date July 22-24, 1881.

<sup>3</sup> In a despatch to the Secretary of State, dated March 7, 1879, the Government of India stated that the restriction of monopolies was 'for a term of years.'

polies, the Ava Court has never contended that monopolies are permissible by the treaty; nor have they expressed any opinion that the treaty has lapsed." With reference to the opinion he had previously expressed, that monopolies constituted an infringement of the treaty, the Chief Commissioner observed : " Article 1 of the treaty, by recognising certain specified monopolies, and by reciting that no indirect dues above the 5 per cent. duty shall be leviable on any goods, does in effect prohibit the grant of other monopolies. This is the view that was taken by previous Chief Commissioners, and by successive Residents in the time of the late King, to whom repeated representations were made by Major Strover<sup>1</sup> regarding the grant of monopolies We should continue to act on the view that the establishment of trade monopolies is contrary to the existing commercial treaty "

The Chief Commissioner then proceeded to discuss the various measures suggested from different quarters as likely to be useful in inducing King Thibaw to abolish the monopolies. He said, "Possible ulterior measures are apparently of three kinds, namely,—(1) despatch of a diplomatic mission to press for observance of the treaty; (2) cancelling the commercial treaty on our part; (3) threat of forcible intervention to compel observance of the treaty." None of these measures appeared to the Chief Commissioner as reasonable. King Thibaw was not likely to offer favourable reception to a British diplomatic mission. The second measure was likely to "provoke a policy of reprisals on the part of the Upper

<sup>1</sup> Resident at Mandalay.

Burma Government" and even to "end in war." The third measure was 'out of the question.' Under the circumstances the Chief Commissioner proposed to remain satisfied with a mere "representation to the Mandalay Government regarding the monopolies." This, he expected, "will have weight with some at least of the King's advisers; it will strengthen the hands of those ministers, of the Chinese merchants, and of others who are protesting, or may hereafter protest, against the monopolies; and when a suitable time for diplomatic action arises, the representations now forwarded will make it all the easier for a British envoy to urge that at any future commercial treaty the establishment of such monopolies shall be expressly and distinctly barred."

A few days later the Chief Commissioner wrote another letter to the Government of India, in which he pointed out that some merchants of Rangoon suggested retaliatory commercial measures. Such measures, they expected, "must soon bring the King's Government to the adoption of wiser counsels, and to the abolition of the monopolies." The Chief Commissioner disagreed with them. He regarded retaliatory measures as "contrary to the principles on which England is accustomed to conduct her commercial diplomacy." He thought that such measures would "cause on both sides a soreness and sense of wrong," destroy the then existing trade<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He added, "This trade is worth about four millions sterling annually ; and, despite occasional scares and frequent monopolies, it has steadily increased for some years past."

between British Burma and Upper Burma, and lead "to a rupture and a war with Upper Burma—a contingency which we ought to avoid by every possible means." To him the "wisest course" appeared to be "to remonstrate against breaches of the Treaty, with such vigour as may be possible and to await the time when they may have more trust in our good faith, and be willing to act up to the terms of the treaty of 1867."

At last the Government of India came upon the scene. A letter dated September 10, 1881, informed the Chief Commissioner that "after giving a very careful consideration to the representations of the mercantile community of British Burma, and reviewing the question in all its aspects, both political and commercial, the Governor-General-in-Council sees serious objections, under present circumstances, to any measures going beyond those which you recommend . . ." He was authorised to address the Burmese Court in the sense of the draft sent on July 18. The Marquis of Hartington, the then Secretary of State, approved the policy of the Government of India.

According to the instructions of the Government of India, Mr. Bernard, the Chief Commissioner, wrote a letter to the Burmese Minister for Foreign Affairs on September 28, 1881. He pointed out that monopolies were contrary to the terms of the treaty of 1867 and injurious to the prosperity of the two countries, and requested that the policy of granting such monopolies might be reconsidered. In reply to this letter the Burmese Minister intimated "that the Burmese Government

entertain the same opinion as was formerly expressed in letter dated 26th April, 1881." The Chief Commissioner naturally regarded this reply as unsatisfactory. He was glad to hear, however, from other sources that the jaggery and cotton monopolies had fallen through.

Lord Ripon thereupon decided to examine the question on the spot. He reached Rangoon on December 20, 1881, and "after full and careful consultation" came to the conclusion that a fresh remonstrance should be addressed by the Chief Commissioner to the Burmese Court. Events were moving rapidly at Mandalay. "Owing to the ill-health of the King and the strife of contending factions, public business had fallen to much confusion, and there was reason to believe that the older and more experienced Ministers, dismayed at the course of events, would be not unwilling to seize any suitable opportunity of using their influence to check the abuses which had sprung up, and to protect trade against measures so certain to injure it." This view received some indirect confirmation from the remarks of a Burmese Envoy who had come to see the Viceroy, but arrived at Rangoon too late for that purpose. He promised to convey the Chief Commissioner's remarks about the monopolies to the Burmese Ministers, who, he was confident, "would not delay taking steps to abolish the monopolies."

In pursuance of the Viceroy's instructions the Chief Commissioner again wrote to the Burmese Minister for Foreign Affairs on January 4, 1882. Remarking that "it is certainly no longer possible to say that the monopoly policy does not

injure trade," he proceeded to use strong words: "If the Government of His Majesty the King continue the policy of monopolies, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council will be compelled to regard the Government of Mandalay as indifferent to the maintenance of good relations with the British Government. The Governor-General in Council disclaims any wish to interfere in the internal affairs, fiscal or other, of Upper Burma; he desires to cultivate and to increase the friendship which has ~~in past time existed~~ between the two countries; but he cannot but look upon the continuance of a commercial policy such as has been adopted at Mandalay during the last few months, as indication of a disregard on the part of the Government of the King of Ava of their duties towards a friendly Government."

These strong words produced immediate effect. On February 16, 1882, all monopolies were abolished. This was followed by the arrival of an Embassy headed by *Panjeet Woona*, a high official. The Secretary of State hoped that these two measures might be 'understood as indications of a change of policy at the Burmese Court.'

The Burmese Envoys reached Simla on April 30, 1882, and began negotiations for the purpose of revising the existing treaties between the two Governments. The principal aim of the Government of India was the re-establishment of a British Resident at Mandalay. This measure, it was hoped, "would be on the whole less open to objection than the existing want of rapid and direct diplomatic communication between two countries which are so closely

connected by position and circumstances". Mr. Grant, Foreign Secretary, and Mr. Fitz-Patric, Law Secretary, were appointed to conduct the negotiations.

At the beginning of the negotiations the Burmese Envoys produced a draft "closely resembling in some of its most objectionable features the sketch of a treaty which had been so unhesitatingly rejected, as radically unsuitable, in 1880." Some of the provisions were—(1) creation of fresh monopolies; (2) increase of the existing 5 p.c. duties to 10 p.c.; (3) introduction of an elaborate system of passports for British subjects; (4) heavy tonnage duties on British ships entering Upper Burma; (5) restriction of armaments on British ships; (6) registration of British subjects in Upper Burma; (7) extradition of political offenders. Apart from these provisions, which were totally unacceptable to the British authorities, the treaty was drawn, not as between the Indian and Upper Burmese Government, but as between the Burmese King and the Queen-Empress, and provided for the permanent representation of the former at the British Court. "The effect," observed the Government of India, "would have been to take out of our hands the control of diplomatic relations between British India and Upper Burma, and to provide for their being conducted on the other side of the globe." The Government of India made it clear to the Burmese Envoys that they were "not prepared to sacrifice the safeguards secured to our commerce by existing Treaties, and that we did not feel justified in entertaining any proposal unaccompanied by suitable guarantees for the re-establishment of a British

Residency at Mandalay." The Burmese Envoys thereupon made some commercial concessions (continuation of the existing 5 p.c. duties and reduction of monopolies) and indicated that the points to which they attached most importance were the privilege of treating directly with the Queen-Empress, the right of free importation of arms, and British co-operation in preventing armed attempts against the King's authority. After elaborate discussions the Government of India agreed to "allow the free importation of arms and munitions of war . . . purchased under the permission of the British Government," if such importation was "justified by the necessary requirements of the Burmese Government."<sup>1</sup> The Government of India also engaged "to use due diligence in preventing" Burmese subjects who had taken refuge in its territory, and any other persons, from organising armed expeditions against the Burmese King. This was an obligation imposed by International Law, and explicitly undertaken at the special request of the Burmese Envoys. Finally, difficulties arose over the Burmese demand that the treaty should be concluded in the name of the Queen. "The question was treated by the Burmese as one affecting their national dignity, and there is some evidence to show that this feeling had long existed among them, though probably it

<sup>1</sup> The Government of India thought that "our interference shall go just so far as may be necessary for purposes of self-protection and no further. The Burmese have no neighbours, except ourselves, against whom munitions of war on a great scale, or of the most advanced models, could ever be called into play; and their finances are not in a condition to admit of the heavy expenditure necessary to secure the latest appliances of war for the sake of mere show."

would have never attained its present prominence but for the recent increase of communication between Upper Burma and European Powers, and more particularly for the admission of the Burmese Sovereign to Commercial Treaties with Italy and France . . . . they were further able to point to the example of Siam, a State which they regard as of inferior rank to their own, and which nevertheless enjoys the privilege of treating directly with Her Majesty's Government." The Burmese Envoys agreed to concede the demand that the British Resident should be received in full dress by the King. It was finally decided that there should be two treaties—one a business treaty with the Government of India, the other a brief treaty with the Queen, providing merely for friendly relations. Two draft treaties were accordingly prepared and placed in the hands of the Burmese Envoys. Before the treaties could be signed, they were asked by their Government to return to Mandalay. They left Simla on August 31, 1882.

On December 21, 1882, the Chief Commissioner received from Mandalay two draft treaties, one between the Queen-Empress and King Thibaw, another between the King and the Viceroy. The second treaty differed from the draft treaty of July in several points. The position of the Resident and the site and protection of the Residency were inadequately treated. Liberty for British subjects to trade and travel was not sufficiently provided. Free trade in cattle was restricted and the tea monopoly was retained. The surrender of political offenders was provided for. The treaty of Yandabo

was declared to be void. These terms could not be accepted by the British authorities. Both the drafts were rejected by the Government of India, and in this rejection Lord Kimberley, the new Secretary of State,<sup>1</sup> concurred.

It is necessary at this stage to turn to the story of King Thibaw's attempts to establish friendly relations with the French Republic. Here he was merely following the precedent established by his father. In July, 1878, a Burmese Envoy sent by King Mindon arrived in Paris. The incident at once attracted the notice of Lord Lyons, who was then British Ambassador in Paris, and he reported it to Lord Salisbury, who held the Foreign Office in Disraeli's Second Government. Lord Lyons also requested M. Waddington, Foreign Minister of France, not to allow Burmese agents to purchase arms in France. M. Waddington enquired whether England would take exception to any diplomatic Mission from Burma being received officially by the French Government. Lord Lyons answered that no objection would be raised to the simple reception of such a Mission; but, he added, "considering the geographical situation of Burmah, and its political relations with British India, Her Majesty's Government no doubt object to any special alliance or understanding between the Burmese Government and any other Power." In this case Lord Lyons was pushing British claims further than the Government of India then desired to do. On March 7, 1879, the Government of India (then presided over by so

<sup>1</sup> Gladstone's Second Government. Lord Kimberley succeeded Lord Hartington when the latter took up the War Office.

strong an imperialist as Lord Lytton) observed in a despatch, to the Secretary of State, "The external relations of the Mandalay Court with other States besides India are, for the present, of minor concern to us."

In May, 1883, the Court of Ava sent four high officers of State to visit Europe for the purpose of gathering information relating to industrial arts and sciences. That member of the party who occupied the highest official rank had never before left Upper Burma. Two members of the Mission had been to Europe before, and knew English well. They proposed to spend about a year in visiting the principal countries of Europe. They were accompanied from Mandalay by a French gentleman named M. de Trevelec. The Mission arrived in Paris in August. It was reported by the British Embassy in Paris that the Burmese Envoys "seemed to desire to renew, with some alterations apparently, the treaty which France had made with Burmah in 1873, but which had never yet been ratified." They did not touch on any political subject, nor allude to the presence of Prince Myngoon Mintha at Chandernagore.<sup>1</sup> Lord Granville, British Foreign

<sup>1</sup> Prince Myngoon Mintha, one of King Mindon's sons, escaped from Benares, where he was living under British surveillance, and took asylum at Chandernagore, a French possession near Calcutta. There he remained till the end of June, 1884, and refused to return to British territory, although the Government of India asked him to do so. He believed that he could secure many adherents if he could go to Upper Burma. From Chandernagore he went to Colombo in a French ship. The French Consul at Colombo sent him in the same ship to Pondicherry, where he remained under the surveillance of the Governor-General of French India. He applied for permission to visit France, presumably to obtain support in carrying out his designs against Thibaw. Later on he went to Bangkok.

Secretary,<sup>1</sup> asked the Embassy to "hold the same language as Lord Lyons did in 1878 upon a similar occasion." The French Foreign Office was accordingly informed that "in consequence of its vicinity to British India, and of its political relations with that Empire, Burmah occupied a peculiar position with regard to Her Majesty's Government, and one which gave them a special interest in all that concerned it."

Even after a stay of about five months in Paris the Burmese Envoys could make no progress with respect to the commercial negotiations which they were holding with the French Foreign Office. Towards the end of December, 1883, M. Jules Ferry, French Foreign Minister, told Lord Lyons that the Envoys "had not sufficient powers to treat seriously and it had been proposed that a fresh Envoy should be despatched from Burmah with proper powers." Lord Lyons requested him to bear in mind that "in a case like this, great caution would be required lest even commercial stipulations should have effects which might not be apparent at first sight to a French negotiator."

On April 5, 1884, M. Jules Ferry received the Burmese Envoys and, in response to the demand of the French Government, they affixed their signature to the unratified commercial treaty of 1873. Lord Lyons spoke about the matter to M. Jules Ferry and invited his attention to "the serious objections which could not but be entertained by His Majesty's Government to any special alliance or political understanding between Burmah and any other Power." The French Minister assured

<sup>1</sup> Gladstone's Second Government.

him that any treaties or conventions which might be concluded between France and Burma would be "entirely of a commercial or consular character" and would not give the Burmese any facilities for obtaining arms. Lord Lyons remarked that "under the guise of commercial arrangements, or of concessions of consular privileges, stipulations having grave political consequences might slip in."

Towards the close of May M. Jules Ferry told Lord Lyons that the negotiations with the Burmese Envoys were likely to be "brought to a satisfactory issue although the Burmese were somewhat stiff and exacting." They attached the greatest importance to a clause authorising the free passage of arms through their territory, but to this the French Government were absolutely determined not to agree.<sup>1</sup> Lord Lyons once more represented to the French Minister "the importance of not forgetting, even in making commercial arrangements with Burmah, the very peculiar situation of that country in relation to British India."

Towards the close of June Lord Kimberley, Secretary of State for India, invited Earl Granville's attention to Article 3 of the Franco-Burmese Treaty of 1873, renewed in April 1884, which provided for a reciprocal appointment of diplomatic agents by the two contracting parties.<sup>2</sup> It was

<sup>1</sup> Because they were not disposed to facilitate the importation of arms into Tonquin.

<sup>2</sup> "The two Governments reciprocally recognise each other's right to have a Diplomatic Agent accredited to one another, and to appoint Consuls or consular Agents in all places where the interests of their nationals may require it. Such agents shall be competent to fly the

suggested that Lord Lyons should try to obtain from the French Government a promise that the functions of any agent who may be appointed under the provisions of that Article would be only of a commercial character. Instructions to this effect were sent by Earl Granville to Lord Lyons, who thereupon spoke to M. Jules Ferry and demanded a promise. The French Minister replied that it was very difficult to draw a distinct line between commercial and political functions; whatever might be the title used by the French agent in Upper Burma,<sup>1</sup> he would in practice have charge of French interests in general. M. Jules Ferry also asked if there were any special treaty engagements between England and Burma which precluded the Burmese from entering into independent political relations with other Powers. Unable to give a direct reply to this significant question, Lord Lyons merely repeated the old plea of "special circumstances" and "preponderating British interests," and requested that his demand might be considered by the French Government "promptly and in a friendly spirit." M. Jules Ferry then referred to some of the difficulties raised by the Burmese Envoys. They resisted the proposal for the establishment of a system like that of the capitulations under which Frenchmen living in Burma would be placed under the exclusive jurisdiction of French Consuls.

flag of their country, and they shall enjoy, personally, as well as in their official character, the same protection and the same immunities and prerogatives as are or shall be hereafter accorded to agents of the same rank belonging to the most favoured nation."

<sup>1</sup> The French Government contemplated the appointment of a Consul-General in Upper Burma.

They wanted that the French agents should take off their shoes on approaching, not only the King, but even functionaries of smaller rank. They wanted facilities for supplying themselves with arms. On these points the French Government were not disposed to make any concession.

A few days later Lord Lyons had another interview with M. Jules Ferry, who assured him that "France did not contemplate making any special political alliance with Burmah." The Burmese, he said, "desired to throw themselves into the arms of France, but the French Government were determined not to accept any offers of this kind. They had no intention of forming with Burmah an alliance defensive and offensive, or any alliance whatever of a special character. All they desired was to establish friendly intercourse and commercial relations on a proper basis. There were no secret communications going on."

These assurances were not strong enough to remove the uneasiness of the British Government. In January, 1885, Lord Lyons again invited M. Jules Ferry's attention to this matter. The French Minister said that Burma was a neighbour of French possessions,<sup>1</sup> and it might be necessary for France to make treaty arrangements with regard to the frontier. Lord Lyons argued that "Burmah could not be termed a neighbour to any French possession in a sense at all resembling that in which she was a neighbour to British

<sup>1</sup> On July 16, 1884, M. Ferry told Lord Lyons that "there were territories on the left of the river Mekong over which Burmah claimed suzerain rights, although she did not, he believed, exercise any practical authority over them."

India." M. Ferry replied that "certainly British India dominated Burmah, and had ample means of exercising a control over her." Finally, he assured Lord Lyons "in general terms" that nothing which could produce complications would be introduced in the proposed Franco-Burmese treaty.<sup>1</sup>

A Franco-Burmese treaty was signed in Paris on January 15, 1885, and ratified on November 25 following. It contained 21 Articles. Article I provided for "lasting peace, perpetual friendship, and full and complete liberty of commercial navigation" between the two States. Articles II-IV secured 'most-favoured-nation' rights to Frenchmen in Burma. By Article V the Burmese Government bound itself "not to create monopolies, nor to authorise, directly or indirectly, their imposition on any article of commerce other than tea, intended for consumption in the fresh state." Article VI provided that the duties levied in Burma would not exceed 5 per cent. *ad valorem* before April 1, 1895. Articles VII-XVII contained detailed provisions about trade, navigation, jurisdiction, etc. Article XVIII provided that each State would

<sup>1</sup> The value of French assurances is diminished by a report on French policy in the Far East drawn up by M. Launsen and read by him in the French Chamber and published by French official papers. This report is specially significant because it was drawn up to express the views of a committee appointed to examine the Franco-Burmese treaty. The report referred to Burma and Siam as not "regularly organised kingdoms," which might, therefore, be justifiably brought within the French sphere of influence. Some Englishmen thought that France went so far because she regarded a war between Russia and England as inevitable. In that case the Government of India was likely to have sufficient work on its north-western frontier, and could not spare any force for operations in Upper Burma. (Geary, *Burma, After the Conquest*, pp. 144, 152-53.)

punish according to its own laws those amongst its subjects who might have returned to its territory after committing certain serious crimes in the territory of the other party. Article XIX provided for the extradition of criminals accused of certain serious crimes. It is significant that the French Government failed to obtain consular jurisdiction over Frenchmen in Burma.<sup>1</sup> The treaty did not contain any political or military stipulations.<sup>2</sup>

Although Lord Lyons could not take any exception to the specific provisions of the treaty, he was convinced that the real object of the Burmese, "in forming relation with European Powers, has been and is to find means of emancipating themselves from the special influence and control of the Indian Government." Although the French Government had rejected the Burmese offer of "throwing themselves into the arms of France," Lord Lyons thought that, in future, the Burmese would continue to act in the same spirit, and the progress of French power to the east of Burma would induce the French Government to attach more importance to their overtures.

After the conclusion of the treaty with France the Burmese Envoys went to Rome to obtain certain necessary alterations in their commercial treaty with Italy. They were received by

<sup>1</sup> M. Ferry told Lord Lyons that "this point was reserved."

<sup>2</sup> In this connection the following statement in M. Launsen's report is significant: "It is not formally stated in the treaty that trade in arms can be freely exercised on the Burmese soil by French merchants, but as no article forbids the commerce, and also article 2 stipulates for entire liberty of all dealings, it must be concluded that the liberty of the trade in arms is, as in other branches of commerce, placed under the safeguard of the treaty." (Geary, *Burma, After the Conquest*, p. 157.)

the King and attended a dinner given by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in honour of the King's birthday. It appears, however, that they remained in Rome for too brief a period<sup>1</sup> to be able to conclude the negotiations. It was reported that the Italian Government desired to conclude a supplementary convention, but this project did not materialise. The Italian Government wanted the 'most-favoured-nation' clause, but the Burmese Envoys only agreed to accept it for one year.

During their residence in Rome the Burmese Envoys entered into negotiations with the German Ambassador in Italy, who had received orders to conclude a German-Burmese commercial treaty in the name of his Government. The treaty finally concluded secured for Germany the 'most-favoured-nation' clause, and contained nothing which could prejudice British interests.

While the Burmese Envoys were busy in concluding commercial agreements with European Powers, a dispute arose between the Governments of India and Upper Burma regarding the Burma-Manipur boundary. In consequence of certain disturbances which had occurred upon this frontier, and of the doubts regarding jurisdiction which had arisen owing to the omission to demarcate precisely the frontier line as described in the Kubo Valley Agreement of 1834, the Government of India decided in 1881 to depute a commission to mark out the boundary, and invited the Ava Government to send representatives to be present at the demarcation. The Foreign Minister of Upper Burma replied that no demarcation was

<sup>1</sup> They arrived in Rome on March 3 and left on April 6.

necessary, and that his Government would not accept any demarcation made by the Government of India. Yet in November and December, 1881, a demarcation was effected by a British Boundary Commission, no representative of the Ava Government being present, and some villages, hitherto supposed to be in Burmese territory, were transferred to the Manipur side of the frontier. In February, 1882, the Burmese Foreign Minister informed the Government of India that the boundary marks in the disputed villages would be destroyed and Burmese officers stationed there for the protection of Burmese subjects. In August, 1882, the Government of India informed the Burmese Government that it was bound to maintain the boundary and to prevent interference with the boundary marks, or encroachment beyond the line denoted by them. For some months the Burmese Government remained silent. In February, 1883, it wrote to the Government of India that some Burmese officials sent to examine the boundary had been obstructed, and that a stockade had been built and garrisoned within the territories of the King of Ava. The Government of India denied these charges. Nothing more was heard on the subject till May, 1884, when the Burmese Foreign Minister wrote to say that his Government could not recognise the validity of the boundary marked by the British Commission in 1881. He said that the Mayein range of mountains was the boundary laid down by the agreement of 1834, and that his Government was not prepared to abide by any other boundary. He requested the Government of India to remove the stockades and boundary pillars built

within Burmese territory, failing which they would be destroyed by Burmese officers.

The Chief Commissioner reported the matter to the Government of India, and with its sanction informed the Burmese Government that the stockades complained of lay within Manipur territory, and that the boundary line demarcated by British officers in 1881 could not be given up. The Burmese Government was warned that any interference with the stockades and boundary pillars would lead to very serious consequences. The Government of India asked the Chief Commissioner of Assam to authorise the Maharaja of Manipur to resist Burmese troops, if they tried to destroy the boundary pillars, and to assist him with a detachment of troops, if necessary.

Towards the close of September, 1884, an outbreak took place in the Mandalay jail. After it was suppressed, about 200 or 300 persons, harmless prisoners and others inside the jail, were slaughtered in a barbarous fashion. The slaughter continued for one or two days. Among the victims there were probably one or more unoffending British subjects.<sup>1</sup> In reporting this incident to the Government of India, the Chief Commissioner remarked, "The Kingdom of Ava is independent of British control; and its Government

<sup>1</sup> This is the account communicated by the Chief Commissioner to the Government of India in a letter dated October 3, 1884. The *Rangoon Gazette* published two versions of the incident and attributed it to the desire of some Ministers to execute a number of notorious characters who had been imprisoned for their loyalty to Prince Myngoon M'nttha. That Prince had escaped from Pondicherry and reached Bangkok. (See p. 282, foot note).

is connected with British Government by a treaty, such as subsists between independent States of (technically) equal rank. There are accordingly obvious objections to our interposing in the internal affairs of the kingdom of Ava, either by way of protest against what may be going on, or otherwise. But the condition of the kingdom of Ava at the present time is peculiar. Nearly half the realm, that is to say, the greater part of the subject Shan States, are in rebellion, and have been in rebellion for three years. A serious revolt occurred in the northern provinces six months ago, and it is possible that insurgents will again make head in that direction a few weeks hence. A pretender to the throne—who is reputed to have adherents in Upper Burma—is at large in India; wants to raise a revolution in Upper Burma; but is prevented from doing this because we refuse to allow British territory to be made a basis for his operations. . . . One or two other claimants to the Ava throne are in British keeping in India, and are prevented from making a dash for Mandalay. It therefore seems that King Theebaw is in undisturbed possession of the throne of Ava because the British Government actively interpose to prevent his rivals raising an insurrection or fomenting a revolution in Upper Burma." The Chief Commissioner, therefore, recommended that a letter of protest should be sent to Mandalay. The Government of India did not approve this suggestion: "There appears to be no proof that any British subjects were sufferers in the course of the outbreak; and, moreover, it seems doubtful whether such a letter would lead to any satisfactory results."

A public meeting was held in Rangoon on October 11, 1884, and four strongly worded resolutions were passed. The most important resolution ran as follows: "That whilst this meeting has no desire to dictate to Her Majesty's Government, it is of opinion that immediate action is necessary, and it strongly recommends the annexation of Upper Burma, or, failing that, that it should be placed in the position of a protected State within the Empire, with a Prince, other than the present ruler, on the throne." The importance of this meeting was minimised in an article published in the *British Burma News* on October 16, 1884. It was asserted that the meeting was attended by "not so many as five persons of position among the Burmese, Chinese, or foreign community,"<sup>1</sup> and that many Burmese and Chinese of the lower class "understood not a word of what was being said, the speeches having been delivered in English." Finally, the writer remarked, "If the Burmese subjects really dislike their ruler, and are desirous of removing him, they are capable of doing so of their own accord, and without the intervention of any foreign Government. That they have performed such offices for themselves, there are several instances to be found recorded in history."

In reporting to the Government of India the resolutions adopted at the meeting, the Chief Commissioner stated that they embodied "the sincere views and convictions of the majority of Englishmen in Rangoon," although he expressed

<sup>1</sup> The elected Burmese members of the Rangoon Municipality took no part in the meeting.

his dissent from the resolution in favour of annexation. With regard to the report that the condition of affairs in Upper Burma was worse in 1884 than it had been during the reign of King Mindon, the Chief Commissioner remarked that, "so far as statistics of external trade are an index of the prosperity of a people, the case is not so strong against the present regime in Upper Burma." The average value of the annual trade between British Burma and Upper Burma in King Thibaw's reign was somewhat larger than during the four years before his accession. Nor was there any substance in the report that disturbances in Upper Burma endangered the peace of British Burma. Frontier raids by robber gangs from Upper Burma were not more numerous "than would be committed by gangs from Central India States over a less extended border." Moreover, British subjects sometimes made predatory incursions into the neighbouring districts of Upper Burma. Again, the Chief Commissioner thought that British merchants had no ground of complaint. The traffic of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company had increased and its officials always met with consideration, if not courtesy, at the hands of the Ava Government during the reign of King Thibaw.<sup>1</sup> These facts undoubtedly justify the Chief Commissioner's conclusion: "King Theebaw's Government is not friendly to the British, but it apparently recognises the superiority of British power; it observes the existing treaty, and

<sup>1</sup> The Manager of the Company thought that "the courtesy shown to his Company is due to fear of offending the British Government, and not to goodwill."

it commits no international offence, though it certainly shows no wish to contract more intimate or more amicable relations . . . neither the recent relations between the two States, nor the slaughter at Mandalay afford adequate warrant for massing troops on the border or invading Ava."<sup>1</sup>

Within a few days of the public meeting in Rangoon, Mr. Bernard, the Chief Commissioner, received a letter from the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce. It was argued that the trade and importation of British goods into Upper Burma had fallen off greatly in consequence of Thibaw's misrule, and the Government was asked either to annex it or to put the Nyaung Yan Prince on the throne. In his report to the Government of India about this letter the Chief Commissioner cited figures<sup>2</sup> to show that British imports into Upper Burma did not decrease during Thibaw's reign, and suggested that the intentions of the Government should be declared as soon as possible in order to create confidence in the public mind.

In November, 1884, the Manager of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company reported to the Chief Commissioner that the Company's steamers were in some danger of attack by robbers, who were said to be collected in large numbers in

<sup>1</sup> In January, 1885, the Chief Commissioner wrote again, "It is questionable whether the British have at present any right, save that of might, to send a force up to Mandalay and expel King Theebaw."

<sup>2</sup> A leading Rangoon merchant named Mr. R. Rowett examined these figures and argued that "the statistics, though they may show a greater volume of trade, do in reality illustrate the decadence of the more important and solid branches of trade between the two countries." The Chief Commissioner remarked, in reply, that the increased export of rice and paddy to Upper Burma, due to the failure of crops there, was responsible for some decline in the exports of manufactured goods.

various places in Burmese territory. The Chief Commissioner brought the matter to the notice of the Burmese Foreign Minister and requested him to take adequate measures for the protection of British subjects in Upper Burma.

Meanwhile Thibaw was gradually losing his hold over his territories. Bhamo was captured by "a handful of Chinese,"<sup>1</sup> and it was apprehended that there might be an incursion of hostile Shans and Chinese from the east towards Mandalay. There were large robber gangs about Mandalay. If Thibaw was overthrown as a result of these disturbances, the Chief Commissioner thought that "it would probably be right for the British Government to send up the Irrawaddy a force sufficient to restore order and to put on the throne the Nyoung Yan Prince, or some other scion of the royal house of Alompra." If, however, Thibaw remained on the throne, but failed to put down the increasing disorders and violence, the question would be more difficult. It would not be right for the British Government to expel him by force, nor was it desirable to employ British troops "to bolster on his throne a monarch who has perpetrated, or has allowed, a series of cruel massacres such as have disgraced the reign of King Theebaw."

On February 4, 1885, the Chief Commissioner received another letter from the British advocates of annexation, who remarked, "The capture of Bhamo by banditti; the prevalence

<sup>1</sup> The Chinese Government did not support these raiders. Geary says, "The Chinese have become the strongest element in the population of Bhamo, and have rather the upper hand of the Burmese. The trade is chiefly carried on by the Chinese, and the best houses belong to them." (*Burma, After the Conquest*, p. 27.)

of dacoity, both in Upper and Lower Burma; the disturbed condition of the Shan States and the political interference of France distinctly show that, unless the British Government interfere promptly, Upper Burma will become the prey of dacoits or the appanage of some other Power." The Chief Commissioner forwarded this letter to the Government of India. Another letter from the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce was received and similarly forwarded. At last the Government of India authorised the Chief Commissioner to inform the memorialists that "the circumstances . . . are not such as to call for the adoption of the strenuous measures advocated by them."

In March, 1885, the Government of India came to know that King Thibaw had granted the concession of certain ruby mines in Upper Burma<sup>1</sup> to a French Company, Bonvillein and Co., for three *lakhs* a year. The Government naturally attached great importance to the general question of French endeavours to obtain privileges in Upper Burma. The British Ambassador in Paris tried to obtain authentic information regarding the concession. On May 18, 1885, the *Times* published a report to the effect that King Thibaw was prepared to reduce the import duty on French goods to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., while that on English goods remained 5 per cent. It was also reported that the French were constructing a railway in Upper Burma and founding a bank at Mandalay. Some Burmese documents showed that the King was really negotiating with France. These negotiations, if fruitful, would have given the

<sup>1</sup> In three districts—Moh Gout, Kyat Pyin, and Kha Thai.

French Government full control over the principal sources of revenue in Upper Burma, the navigation of the Irrawaddy, and the only route from British ports to Western China. The Chief Commissioner, therefore, proposed to ask King Thibaw for an assurance that the proposed concessions would not be granted, and observed, "The refusal of Ava to comply with our request involves us in annexation." This view was supported by the Viceroy, who informed the Secretary of State that the "establishment by France of dominant or exclusive influence in Upper Burmah would involve such serious consequences to our own Burmese possessions, and to India, that it should be prevented even at the risk of hostilities with Mandalay."

To this conclusion the authorities were being steadily pushed by the importunities of British merchants in Burma as well as in England. It was a merchant who presided at the famous public meeting of Rangoon. We have already seen how the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce and the Irrawady Flotilla Company repeatedly urged upon the Government of India the necessity of annexation for the improvement of commercial relations. In April, 1885, the Macclesfield Chamber of Commerce<sup>1</sup> and the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce requested the Secretary of State to re-establish a British Resident at Mandalay, to re-establish a mixed court of justice there, and to secure every "reasonable facility . . . for the freedom of commerce." Lord Kimberley

<sup>1</sup> This Chamber "was of opinion that at present annexation was inexpedient, but that this country should see that no other nation annexed Burmah, as it would prove very prejudicial to English commerce."

thereupon wrote to the Government of India that "both commercial and political considerations render it extremely desirable that the diplomatic representation of the Indian Government at Mandalay . . . . should, if possible, be restored." The Government of India was authorised to choose the time and the manner of asking the Burmese King to receive a British Envoy with an armed escort of 50 men, according to Article VII of the Treaty of Yandabo.

In a remarkable letter, dated May 18, 1885, to the London Chamber of Commerce, the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce suggested that Burma should be separated from India and constituted a colony governed directly from London. It was argued that Burma had "nothing in common with India geographically": "The people of Burma are totally distinct from the people of India, differing in race, in language, in religion, and differing very widely in their freedom from caste prejudices and in their readiness to accept Western methods and Western civilization." Secondly, it was asserted that Burma was "the most heavily taxed portion of the (Indian) Empire, while it is starved in its requirements on every side, and in many ways the interests of Burma are sacrificed to suit the convenience of India." Officers were frequently transferred from India to Burma and *vice versa*. Rangoon, "the third city in the Indian Empire, judged by its trade," was denied a High Court, although the "existing courts are totally inadequate to cope with the existing work, and absurdly inadequate to cope with the work which would arise were the people not driven to accept any compromise out of the law as at present adminis-

tered."<sup>1</sup> In public works also Burma was neglected; there were scarcely any roads outside the chief towns, and not more than 320 miles of railway. There was no lack of funds; more than one-third of the revenue raised in Burma was appropriated by India. Perhaps the most important reason that led the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce to demand separation of Burma from India (as well as the annexation of Upper Burma) was that the Burmese were better consumers of British goods than Indians: "The Native of India buys little else from the manufacturers of Great Britain than a few yards of cotton cloth. The people of Burma all spend their money freely on important luxuries." If Burma was made a colony independent of India, "not only would much more have been done by this time to develop its own resources, but a firmer policy in connexion with the petty kings beyond British territory would have done much to extend British trade through a large part of Indo-China, and have made Rangoon one of the largest trade-centres in the world."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In view of the fact that the Government of India did not find it necessary to establish a High Court in Rangoon even after the annexation of Upper Burma, it is difficult to accept this statement. Sir Charles Crosthwaite refers to another defect in the judicial administration of Lower Burma: "The Judicial Commissioner, seldom stayed long in Burma. It is no libel on the distinguished men who have held this position to say that as a rule they had no knowledge of the language or customs of the people or of the conditions of Burma. They came from some quiet province of India, and were unable" to appreciate the fact that after 35 years of British rule the country "was in a more disturbed state than after the second war."—*Pacification of Burma*, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> A letter expressing similar views was sent to Lord Randolph Churchill in July, 1885, by the President, Incorporated Chamber of Commerce, Liverpool.

This letter was forwarded to Lord Randolph Churchill, the new Secretary of State<sup>1</sup> by the London Chamber of Commerce. While "not prepared to support at the present moment the claim for entire separation of British Burmah from India," the Chamber requested the Secretary of State to initiate measures for the better government of Burma, and "to put an end to the state of anarchy which prevails in native Burmah to the detriment of the commercial relations of this country with the British and Native Provinces."<sup>2</sup> Objections were also urged against the recently concluded Franco-Burmese treaty.

It is necessary at this stage to resume the story of official negotiations regarding the French concessions. We have already seen that towards the close of July and the beginning of August the Chief Commissioner and the Viceroy were prepared for annexation. Lord Randolph Churchill asked the Viceroy to defer communication with the Burmese Government till the attitude of the French Government could be determined. Lord Salisbury, Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, had a conversation regarding the subject with M. Waddington, French Ambassador in London, who said that he knew nothing whatever of the alleged concession. Meanwhile a Burmese document, in the form of a letter from the French Prime Minister to the Burmese Foreign Minister, dated January 19, 1885, was secured by the Chief Commissioner, who regarded it as genuine. The letter showed that the French Government was prepared to allow the transport of arms to Burma through Tonquin. The Burmese Ambassador

<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury's First Government.

to Paris. Halted in Rangoon on his way and admitted in conversation with the Chief Commissioner's Secretary that the question of constructing a railway was under negotiation between Mandalay and Paris.

Then came the famous case of the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation. This Company had been cutting timber for 20 years in forests leased from the King of Burma; the revenue it paid was so much per log worked out. A new lease was entered into on October 19, 1884, and the Company agreed to pay for the Ningyan forests a lump sum revenue of four and a half *lakhs* per annum in advance. Reports were submitted to the King, accusing the Company of having bribed the Governor of Ningyan with Rs. 60,000 to connive at its depriving the King of his just revenue. This accusation was made by a former Governor of Ningyan, in order to get the new man into disgrace, and to secure his own re-appointment. Official pressure was exercised upon foresters employed by the Company to go to Mandalay and to give evidence in support of the accusation. The Company found it 'quite impossible' to prove its innocence. So, in April, 1885, the Manager of the Company requested the Chief Commissioner to interfere in the matter. The Chief Commissioner requested the Burmese Foreign Minister to enquire into the matter. In his reply, dated May 17, 1885, the Minister denied that the Company had not been given full opportunity to carry on its work. It was alleged that the Ningyan Thitgaungs were not paid their legitimate wages by the Company, and on their complaint the authorities at Mandalay examined Mr. Andreino,

the Company's Agent. Mr. Andreino was unable to give any definite answer at once and wanted time to make enquiries from the officers of the Company. In order to prevent delay arising out of correspondence, the Minister sent to the Chief Commissioner one of the plaintiff Thitgaungs and a representative of the Company and requested him to assist them in securing "accurate, complete, and authentic statements." Against these charges the Manager of the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation informed the Chief Commissioner that the complaint of the Thitgaungs was not voluntary, being drawn up by a Minister at Mandalay and dated nearly two months before their arrival in the capital. Some of the signatories, he said, were men discharged by the Company seven or eight months ago. This reply was communicated to Mandalay by the Chief Commissioner on June 17, 1885. The Chief Commissioner's letter was read to the King in the presence of all the Ministers, and they tried to throw the blame on one another. The matter was complicated by the interference of the French Consul at Mandalay, who asked the Burmese Government to find a plea to cancel the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation's forest leases and to confer it upon French merchants. On August 12, 1885, the Ministers decided that the Corporation had defrauded the King to the extent of *ten lakhs* of rupees by taking away 56,702 logs without entering them in the books.<sup>1</sup> They also decided that the Ningyan

<sup>1</sup> The following explanation was offered by the Chief Commissioner to the Government of India: "The Ministers have ignored the records maintained by their own officials at Ningyan, and have based their finding

lease should be cancelled and the claims of the Thitgaungs decided separately. The plan to cancel the lease was given up on August 13, and it was decided to insist on a fine. The Burmese Government was badly in need of money, and the amount charged from the Corporation was expected to provide a welcome relief.

The Company was, of course, not at all prepared to surrender. On August 20, 1885, the Solicitors for the Corporation served a notice on M. Haas, the French Consul at Mandalay, to the following effect: ". . . our clients will hold you or whoever may interfere with their rights and privileges in the forests in question responsible for all losses, damages, and expenses they may suffer or incur in consequence of any such interference." Mr. Andreino was confident that the British Government "surely would not like to see the Corporation ruined; and permit the Burmese to be guided by the French." The London Agents of the Corporation brought the matter to the notice of the Secretary of State, who asked for the Viceroy's advice. The Viceroy accepted the Chief Commissioner's suggestion<sup>1</sup> that the King should be requested to take

entirely upon the figures obtained from the British Forest Office at Toungoo. They have ignored altogether the lump-sum contract of 1883, and have practically ignored the lump-sum contract of 1882. They have taken no notice of the Chief Commissioner's explanation that the rough classification of the logs maintained at Toungoo is misleading . . . "

<sup>1</sup> The Chief Commissioner thus expressed his views in a letter to the Government of India, "On the question whether any money is really due from the Corporation to their foresters or to the Ava government . . . the Chief Commissioner is not in a position to offer an opinion . . . But it is clear that the decree is based on insufficient information and inaccurate

measures for the amicable settlement of the dispute. On August 28, 1885, the Chief Commissioner wrote a letter to the Burmese Foreign Minister, asking him whether he was prepared to suspend the decree against the Corporation, and whether he was prepared to settle the dispute according to the verdict of an arbitrator to be appointed by the Viceroy.

Meanwhile the Burmese Government had asked the Corporation to pay a sum of Rs. 23,59,066 in four equal monthly instalments, failing which their timber in the Ningyan forests was to be confiscated to the extent of the default. On August 31 the Chief Commissioner sent a telegram to the Burmese Foreign Minister, asking him not to press the Corporation for payment, and warning him that "serious consequences might arise" if the case was summarily dealt with. No reply was received from Mandalay, but Burmese troops advanced towards the frontier and fired at British rafts. The Chief Commissioner was naturally anxious for the safety of the Corporation employees and property in Upper Burma.<sup>1</sup>

The question of French concessions in Upper Burma was raised again by a deputation from the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce to the Chief Commissioner, who promised that steps would be taken "to protect British interests in the

data, and there can apparently be no doubt but that the sum now demanded is very greatly in excess of what can, under any circumstances, be really due, or of what the Corporation can possibly pay."

<sup>1</sup> There were several thousands of employees, of whom perhaps 15 or 20 were Europeans, and 2,000 or so British subjects. There were 900 elephants, 10,000 buffaloes and 150,000 logs of teak ready for export. The value of the timber and plant was from 50 to 70 *lakhs* of rupees.

important trade with Ava, and in the still more important commerce which we hope will arise between the Burma seaboard and Western China." The Calcutta Chamber of Commerce sent a telegram to invite the Viceroy's attention to the matter. The Manager of the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation wrote to the Chief Commissioner that the Franco-Burmese Bank scheme was being floated in Paris and sent to him a copy of the alleged agreement on the subject between the Burmese Government and a French engineer named the Comte A. Matie de la Bourdonnais. The most important clause of this document ran as follows: "Sums which may be borrowed by the King (from the Bank) shall always be warranted either by the revenues of the custom house or all other Royal incomes (teak forests, coal mines, silver mines, railways, telegraph lines, navigation on the Irrawaddy and the Salween, roads; canals, bridges etc.) and bear interest at 10 per cent. per annum." The concession was to be valid for 50 years. The document was dated at Rome, April 13, 1885.

We have already seen how the British Foreign Office, under the control of the Prime Minister himself, interested itself in the French concessions case. Not satisfied with M. Waddington's denial of official responsibility in the matter, Lord Salisbury asked Sir John Walsham, British Ambassador in Paris, to bring it to the notice of the French Government. Lord Salisbury's language leaves no room for doubt that he regarded Upper Burma as a British sphere of influence. He wrote, "The relations in which Upper Burmah has long stood towards Her Majesty's Indian Empire render it impossible for

Her Majesty's Government to view with indifference proceedings which would issue in the establishment of any preponderating influence in Burmah other than that of the Indian Government."

Sir John Walsham had an interview with M. De Freycinet, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, on September 16, and was told that exaggerated reports must have reached the Viceroy about the activities of the French Consul at Mandalay. A few days later the French *Charge d' Affaires* in London informed Lord Salisbury that "there is no truth whatever in the report that a convention has been concluded between France and Burmah by which a concession for railways, with interest guaranteed, is secured to a French Company, control given to the French Government over the Customs on the Irrawaddy River, and a concession granted for the establishment of a bank at Mandalay." M. Waddington also told him that the French Government knew nothing about the concessions which, if granted at all, must have been granted to some speculative company. These assurances did not satisfy the India Office, which informed the Foreign Office on October 5 that "the French Consul at Mandalay, in connexion with certain commercial projects of a French capitalist, was encouraging by his policy the King of Burmah in a course of action calculated to cause prejudice to . . . British interests." The arrival of a Burmese Envoy in Paris<sup>1</sup> naturally sharpened these suspicions. A supposed secret treaty between France and

<sup>1</sup> The object of the Envoy was declared to be the ratification of the commercial treaty concluded on January 15, 1885.

Burma appeared in some English and French newspapers, but the French Foreign Minister assured Sir John Walsham that "there was absolutely not a word of truth in it." A few days later he told the British Ambassador that all difficulties about M. Haas, the French Consul at Mandalay, had disappeared, as he had applied for leave to quit Burma on account of his health, and leave to do so had been given to him.

On October 22, the Burmese Envoy in Paris had an interview with Lord Lyons, who had resumed his office as British Ambassador there, and handed over to him a letter expressing regret at the absence of direct diplomatic relations between London and Mandalay. Lord Lyons told him that he had no authority to discuss the questions at issue between the Governments of India and Burma. The British Ambassador suspected that the Envoy wanted "to treat the questions at issue between Burmah and the Government of India in Europe, or at all events, to put himself in a position here to send information and advice with regard to the disposition of Her Majesty's Government direct to Mandalay, and to suggest there the idea that the Government of India may be overruled by orders from home." This suspicion was confirmed a few days later, when the Envoy proposed "to enter into negotiations in London with respect to the matter in dispute." Lord Lyons refused to enter into any discussion with him; but a few days later informed him that it was not possible for the London authorities "to interfere with the direct control exercised by the Government of India over relations with Burmah."

The mercantile community again came to the forefront. The London Chamber of Commerce requested the Secretary of State "either to annex the whole of Native Burmah, or to assume a protectorate over that country by the appointment of a sovereign under British control, under such conditions as will lead to a predominance of British influence there." The Chamber referred to "the national cry for the opening up of new markets," and suggested "the assumption of a protectorate over the Shan States and other independent territories lying between Burmah and the Indian and Chinese frontiers." Again, it was pointed out that "the operations of the French in Tonquin, and their evident desire to extend their territorial possessions over the Malay Peninsula, make it of paramount importance for the safety of our Indian Empire, and the extension of Anglo-Indian trade with China, to retain under our control the means of direct communication with India *via* Siam, as well as access in the future to South-west China." The Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and Manufacturers also sent a similar petition to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Meanwhile a conflict had become imminent in Upper Burma. In his reply to the Chief Commissioner's letter dated August 28 the Burmese Foreign Minister argued that the statements of the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation were untrue and that the Corporation had "fraudulently exported, without payment of royalty, timber which should have paid royalty." Under these circumstances the Minister thought that the question of arbitration did not arise, and the Chief Commissioner was "distinctly informed" that "on no account

whatever can there be any suspension or modification of any necessary order or action against the Bombay-Burma Company." To this letter the Chief Commissioner replied on October 22, stating that the Minister's reply was not acceptable to the Government of India and insisting upon three demands: (1) An Envoy from the Viceroy should be suitably received at Mandalay, and the case of the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation should be settled in communication with him. (2) All action against the Corporation should be suspended till the arrival of the Envoy. (3) For the future an Envoy from the Viceroy should be allowed to reside at Mandalay with proper securities for his safety, and treated honourably. If a satisfactory reply did not reach the Chief Commissioner on or before November 10, the British Government would proceed to such action as they deemed fit. Neither the Chief Commissioner nor the Viceroy would receive any Burmese mission or enter into any discussion about these demands. Two additional demands were also put forward tentatively, but immediate acceptance was not insisted upon: (1) The Burmese Government should regulate the external relations of the realm in accordance with the advice of the Viceroy. (2) The Burmese Government should afford complete facilities for opening up British trade with China. All details regarding these proposals were to be settled later on by discussion between the Burmese Ministers and the British Envoy.

It was not expected that the proud Burmese King would accept these humiliating conditions and reduce himself to the

position of the Indian Princes. So the Viceroy issued orders for the immediate preparation of a force numbering 10,000 men and the Chief Commissioner took measures for the safety of Europeans living in Upper Burma. General Prendergast was appointed to take charge of the expedition and invested with supreme political as well as military authority. Colonel Sladen was placed under his orders as Political Officer. He was instructed to occupy Mandalay and dethrone Thibaw; he was to be informed later on whether Upper Burma was to be annexed.

The Burmese reply to the ultimatum, dated November 4, was received by the Chief Commissioner on November 9. The Burmese Foreign Minister denied that the judgment on the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation was passed in an arbitrary manner. He said, "In consideration of the fact that they (defendants) were of English race, the records of an English Forest Office were taken as a basis, and the judgment was passed in accordance with the laws of the state on the merits of the case." Yet the King was prepared "to look after and assist foreign merchants so that they should not suffer any hardship," if the Corporation presented a petition to him. With regard to the establishment of a British Embassy at Mandalay, the Burmese Government was ready to permit a British Envoy "to reside and come in and go out as in former times." All merchants and traders, trying to increase trade between Burma and China, would be "assisted in conformity with the customs of the land." With reference to the demand about the regulation of the foreign relations,

the Minister stated, ". . . the internal and external affairs of an independent separate State are regulated and controlled in accordance with the customs and laws of that State. Friendly relations with France, Italy, and other States have been, are being, and will be maintained. Therefore in determining the question whether or not it is proper that one Government alone should make any such claim, the Burmese Government can follow the joint decision of the three States, France, Germany, and Italy, who are friends of both Governments."

It is obvious that the Burmese Government did not expect this reply to be regarded as satisfactory by the British authorities. Without waiting for the Chief Commissioner's reply King Thibaw issued a proclamation asking his subjects to fight for the cause of religion and national honour. He declared that he would himself march at the head of his army in order to "efface these heretic *kalas* and conquer and annex their country." A significant passage in the proclamation ran as follows: " . . . the royal troops to be sent forth will not be collected and banded together as formerly by forcibly pressing into service all such as can be obtained, but the royal troops who are now already banded into regiments in Mandalay will be sent forth to attack, destroy, and annex . . . Loyal officials are to make inquiries for volunteers and others who may wish to serve . . . "

The Government of India regarded the Burmese reply as unsatisfactory and authorised General Prendergast to advance upon Mandalay (November 13). General Prender-

gast started at once and made a 'procession' up the Irrawaddy 'almost unopposed'<sup>1</sup>. "Such opposition," says Sir Charles Crosthwaite,<sup>2</sup> "as there had been was childish in its feebleness and want of skill and purpose. Fortunately for us the King and his Ministers prided themselves on their voluntary army system. Unfortunately the soldiers to whom he trusted were insufficiently trained, badly armed and equipped. He had intended, perhaps, to remedy all this and to train his troops for six months before the fighting began. His enemy, however, was unreasonably hasty and had an abundance of fast steamers for transporting the invading force."<sup>3</sup> As he proceeded up the river General Prendergast destroyed some stockades and took some forts. Within a few days he appeared before Ava, "where the bulk of the defending army had been collected." On November 26 he was met there by a Burmese Minister begging for an armistice.<sup>4</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> "The Burmese had collected immense stores of war material at Mandalay, but the bulk of their fighting army was scattered all over the country and could not have been recalled to the capital in time to offer anything like a stout resistance; but had they even defended themselves with the means at command, Mandalay could not have been taken without a severe struggle, and a proportionately large destruction of life."—Colonel Sladen to Government of India, December 16, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> Chief Commissioner of Burma, 1887-90.

<sup>3</sup> *The Pacification of Burma*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> "The Burmans had not prepared for war; they never believed it would come. There was the ultimatum, it was true, but the Burmans did not know anything about an ultimatum. How could great questions be discussed and settled in five days?" So the Ministers advised the King to surrender; they thought that he would be kept on the throne, "with some limitations of his power no doubt, but he would still be left in his palace and on the throne." (Geary, *Burma, After the Conquest*, pp. 60-61.)

Minister was told that the King's life would be spared if he surrendered himself, his army, and Mandalay, and if the Europeans at the capital were left unharmed. On November 27 the King accepted all the demands and the army surrendered.<sup>1</sup> General Prendergast arrived at Mandalay on November 28 and received the formal submission of the King on the following day. A provisional Government was established at Mandalay, composed of some Burmese Ministers, with Colonel Sladen as President. No armed resistance was offered to the invaders. The Chief Commissioner informed the Secretary of State that the people and priests<sup>2</sup> were coming in and willingly accepting the new situation.<sup>3</sup> Lord Randolph Churchill expressed his "special gratification" on learning that "the British force was welcomed by the inhabitants of the country as a deliverance from past and existing

<sup>1</sup> It seems that Thibaw was misled by a minister named Tyndah, who told him that the English were coming not to fight, but to negotiate a treaty. That is why Thibaw did not carry out his plan of taking shelter in the Shan States. (*Geary, Burma, After the Conquest*, pp. 214-16).

<sup>2</sup> The attitude of the Pongyis was generally friendly, but, as Sir Charles Crosthwaite observes, "They knew that in losing a Buddhist King their position and influence must be lowered. They could hardly be asked to rejoice with us." See *The Pacification of Burma*, pp. 39-40, 62. A conversation with Thathabaing, the head of the Buddhist monks, convinced Geary that his attitude was that of "wise acquiescence in the irrevocable." (*Burma, After the Conquest*, pp. 106-109). In the Burma Census Report for 1901 we are told that "but for the monks the pacification of the country would have been completed far earlier than was actually the case. Even as late as in 1897 a pongyi was able to collect a handful of fanatical laymen around him, and lead them to an attack on the fort at Mandalay."

<sup>3</sup> Geary, however, says that Bernard opposed annexation because "it was doubtful whether the people of Burma wanted to become British subjects." (*Burma, After the Conquest*, p. 140.)

evils, and as the prelude for the establishment of British rule, for which the people evinced a genuine desire." Similar statements occur in Lord Dufferin's<sup>1</sup> Minute of February 17, 1886.<sup>2</sup> Later experience, however, proved, as Sir Charles Crosthwaite says, "that a considerable minority of the population, to say the least, did not want us."<sup>3</sup>

It has been already observed that the Government of India had not finally decided to annex Upper Burma when General Prendergast was despatched to occupy Mandalay. As soon as the news of the success of the expedition was available in England, the Liverpool General Brokers' Association and the London Chamber of Commerce requested the Secretary of State to "resolve on the immediate and permanent annexation of Upper Burmah." In a despatch to the Government of India, dated December 31, 1885, Lord Randolph Churchill stated that the annexation of Upper Burma was "the inevitable result" of King Thibaw's deposition. The proclamation of annexation was issued by Lord Dufferin on January 1, 1886. "The arrogance and barbarity," said Lord Randolph Churchill, "of a Native Court, the oppression of British subjects, the hindrance to British commerce, the intrigues of foreign nations, are for ever terminated in Upper Burmah."

<sup>1</sup> Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1884-1888.

<sup>2</sup> He says that there cannot be any doubt "that the prospect of the substitution of a strong and orderly Government for the incompetent and cruel tyranny of their former ruler is regarded with general satisfaction by the inhabitants of Upper Burma."

<sup>3</sup> *The Pacification of Burma*, p. 14.

Lord Dufferin was at first disposed to convert Upper Burma into a protected State instead of assuming the direct administration of the country,<sup>1</sup> but in February, 1886, he changed his mind. He explained his reasons in a Minute dated February 17, 1886. It was not possible to convert Upper Burma into a buffer state like Afghanistan, which would remain "perfectly independent in matters of internal administration" but submit to British 'supervision' over external relations. It was too weak to defend itself,<sup>2</sup> and might drag England into war with China. Nor could Upper Burma be maintained as "a fully protected State, with a native dynasty and native officials, but under a British Resident, who should exercise a certain control over the internal administration, as well as over its relations with foreign Powers." Burmese rulers were not "highly civilised, intelligent, and capable persons" like rulers of Indian States. "A puppet King of the Burmese type would prove a very expensive, trouble-

<sup>1</sup> It is, however, significant that even before the emergence of the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation case Lord Dufferin had written to the Chief Commissioner, "If the French proceedings should eventuate in any serious attempt to forestall us in Upper Burma, I should not hesitate to annex the country; and, I think that this mode of procedure would be preferable to setting up a doubtful prince." Again, on October 19, 1885, he wrote that annexation was better than placing a protected prince upon the throne. (Lyall, *The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, Vol. II. pp. 118, 120.)

<sup>2</sup> "It is quite enough to be worried by a buffer policy on the west without reduplicating it on the east. Moreover elasticity and a certain power of intermediate resistance are the essential qualities which constitute a 'buffer,' and to a certain though limited extent they may be said to exist in Afghanistan, but Burmah is so soft and pulpy a substance that she could never be put to such a use." (Sir Alfred Lyall, *The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, Vol. II, p. 120.)

some, and contumacious fiction." But the greatest difficulty in pursuing this course was that "there is no Prince of the Royal House to whom the trust could be safely confided." The only available respectable candidate was the Myngoon Prince, who was under French influence. The Nyoung Oke Prince, then living in Bengal, was "unpopular in Burma, and of unsatisfactory character." The claim of the Nyoung Yan Prince's minor son could not be considered, for "this would impose upon us all the trouble, anxiety, and cost of a British occupation, without securing us any corresponding advantages in the present, while we should be committing ourselves in the distant future to an arrangement which, in the end, would probably disappoint our expectations, and to a Prince who might prove totally unfitted to play the part designed for him."<sup>1</sup> Lord Dufferin even considered the plan of placing a Lama at the head of a protected Burmese State, but he dismissed it as of "too experimental a character."

Upper Burma was incorporated in British India on February 26, 1886, but the disturbed condition of the country<sup>2</sup> made it impossible for the British authorities to govern it according to the elaborate statute law applicable to the older provinces. The constitution of India in those days authorised the Secretary of State to constitute any province, or any part

<sup>1</sup> Geary says that the establishment of a vassal King at Mandalay "would have saved India from the burden of the financial deficit which is foreseen as the result of endowing Upper Burma at once with a somewhat costly administration; and it would probably have restored tranquillity more speedily and less expensively than purely military measures," (*Burma, After the Conquest*, p. vi.)

<sup>2</sup> See *Appendix A.*

of a province, an excepted or scheduled territory. Such a territory could then be governed by regulations drawn up by the Provincial Government and approved by the Governor-General-in-Council.<sup>1</sup> This procedure was followed in the case of Upper Burma, which (excepting the Shan States) became a scheduled territory with effect from March 1, 1886.

<sup>1</sup> Ilbert, *The Government of India*, second edition, p. 405.

## APPENDIX A

### 'DACOITY' IN UPPER BURMA AFTER ANNEXATION

Sir Charles Crosthwaite gives a detailed account of the operations of the 'dacoits' in Upper Burma during the years 1886—1890, and describes the measures which were adopted by the British Government for their suppression.<sup>1</sup> He thinks that 'dacoity' originated in the efforts of King Thibaw's soldiers to expel the invaders from their country ; but the soldiers soon lost their patriotism and became common brigands, harassing the invaders and their own countrymen in order to earn their living. He says, "The army . . . refused to obey the order to surrender which had come from Mandalay. Before General Prendergast could land his men they dispersed over the country in every direction with their arms, and as the British force had no cavalry to pursue them, they got away to a man. At first under various leaders, few of whom showed any military talent, they waged a guerilla warfare against the invaders ; and afterwards, when their larger divisions had been defeated and broken up, they succeeded in creating a state of anarchy and brigandage ruinous to the peasantry and infinitely harassing to the British."<sup>2</sup> Sir George White, Commander of the Burma Field Force, wrote on July 17, 1886, "These bands are freebooters, pillaging wherever they go, but usually reserving the refinement of their cruelty for those who have taken office under us or part with us."<sup>3</sup> The military and police measures taken by the Government were undoubtedly very severe in their effects upon the population, but very few dared

<sup>1</sup> *The Pacification of Burma*, Chaps. I-VIII, X-XIV.

<sup>2</sup> *The Pacification of Burma*, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *The Pacification of Burma*, p. 14.

to give information to the British authorities at the risk of inviting the merciless revenge of the 'dacoits'. Sir Charles Crosthwaite says, "The attacks on villages, the murder and torture of headmen and their families, were not so much the symptoms of rebellion against our Government as of the efforts made by the brigands to crush the growing revolt against their tyranny."<sup>1</sup> These remarks must be read in conjunction with the following official statement,<sup>2</sup> "As regards the atrocities committed by the dacoits, they were very seldom wanton. . . . There were many instances of the most barbarous and inhuman practices, but these were exceptional cases for the extortion of evidence, or to find where treasure was buried." We must also note that what the Chief Commissioner calls 'tyranny' was sometimes efficiently organised and approximated 'a regular system of government'.<sup>3</sup> The theory that patriotism degenerated into brigandage is also supported by the following extract from the report of the Deputy Commissioner of Myingyan, submitted in 1890, ". . . the organisation (of the 'dacoit' chief Ya Nyun in the Myingyan district) which had, perhaps, its first origin in a desire to resist the British Government, degenerated rapidly, as might have been expected from the disreputable persons who played the part of leaders, into a band of marauders who subsisted by terrorism, rapine, murder, dacoity, and other outrages. While remaining in open defiance of Government, they soon ceased to be political rebels . . .".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Pacification of Burma*, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> *Gazetteer of Upper Burma*, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> See the account of Octama's organisation in the Minbu district in Crosthwaite's *The Pacification of Burma*, Chap. XII. We read in the official *Gazetteer of Upper Burma* (p. 48), ". . . many of these *bos* ruled with discretion and moderation where they were supported and not thwarted."

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in *The Pacification of Burma*, p. 112.

Mr. Grattan Geary, a Bombay journalist who visited Upper Burma in 1886, looked at 'dacoity' from a different point of view. In its first stage, he says, 'dacoity' had "next to nothing to do with patriotism, or even with the desire of pillage; it is a fight for food . . . now every officer, civil or military, vouches for the fact that it is in no way directed against the English."<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere he says, "It is a movement of one village against the next ; of one group of villages against another group."<sup>2</sup> According to him, the "promiscuous shooting of so-called dacoits"<sup>3</sup> was one of the most important causes of the rapid spread of the "movement of resistance."<sup>4</sup> The excesses of the British officers, we are told, made the 'dacoits' bolder; they grouped themselves under two Princes of the old dynasty and "considered themselves soldiers."<sup>5</sup>

Although it is not safe to differ from the official view expressed so authoritatively by Sir Charles Crosthwaite, it appears that Mr. Geary's theory may be supported on some reasonable grounds. That 'dacoity' was a common phenomenon in Burma, specially in times of disturbances, is a well-known fact. In Lower Burma 'dacoity' prevailed in an aggravated form for two or three years after the country was annexed.<sup>6</sup> General Fytche (Chief Commissioner of British Burma, 1867—1871) has left for us an interesting account of the measures adopted by him for the suppression of 'dacoity' in the Bassein district after the war of 1852.<sup>7</sup> He makes it clear that the 'dacoits' were not

<sup>1</sup> *Burma, After the Conquest*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>2</sup> *Burma, After the Conquest*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>3</sup> For an instance, see *Burma, After the Conquest*, pp. 280-81.

<sup>4</sup> *Burma, After the Conquest*, p. 248.

<sup>5</sup> *Burma, After the Conquest*, pp. 267-269.

<sup>6</sup> For an instance showing how men were forced to become 'dacoits' after 1852, see *Burma, After the Conquest*, p. 47.

<sup>7</sup> *Burma, Past and Present*, Vol. I, pp. 128-139.

patriots fighting against the imposition of British rule; they were men without any means of honest livelihood.<sup>1</sup> The following extract from one of his despatches, dated August 5, 1853, shows the nature of the 'dacoities' which were carried on under Burmese rule: "Dacoity appears to be normal in the country; almost every inhabitant is ready to perpetrate one, if the plunder to be obtained is worth his while, and it can be committed with small risk." He adds that 'dacoits' were fostered by Burmese officials for a share of their plunder.<sup>2</sup> It is significant that more than 35 years of British rule could not extinguish 'dacoity' in Lower Burma.<sup>3</sup> Shortly before the annexation of Upper Burma the Government of India invited the attention of the Chief Commissioner to "the constant occurrence of petty dacoities" in Lower Burma. Sir Charles Crosthwaite observes, "Tharrawaddy has always been a sore spot.<sup>4</sup> In the early part of 1889 it was brought into a more orderly state; but towards the end of the year . . . crime increased to such a degree that strenuous measures had to be adopted."<sup>5</sup> There is no reason to believe that the people of Upper Burma were habitually more law-abiding. It must also be remembered that towards the close of Thibaw's reign partial anarchy prevailed in Upper Burma and, if British official reports are to be believed, the 'dacoits' were secretly supported by the ministers.<sup>6</sup> Under

<sup>1</sup> Despatch dated February 18, 1854. Quoted in *Burma, Past and Present*, Vol. I, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *Burma, Past and Present*, Vol. I, pp. 131-132.

<sup>3</sup> Crosthwaite, *The Pacification of Burma*, p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> In the *Burma Gazetteer* (Vol. I, p. 258) this district is described as "long notorious for the ill-repute of its inhabitants."

<sup>5</sup> *The Pacification of Burma*, p. 90.

<sup>6</sup> Describing the condition of Upper Burma under Thibaw, Sir Charles Crosthwaite says, "Bands of armed brigands, some of considerable strength under active leaders, sprang up everywhere. After a time brigands and Ministers formed an unholy alliance for 'loot.' Elsewhere he says about

the circumstances we may accept Mr. Geary's statement that immediately after Thibaw's deposition 'dacoity' was nothing more than a mere "fight for food."<sup>1</sup> This view seems to be confirmed by the report that British military posts and sentinels were not attacked at the beginning.<sup>2</sup>

It becomes necessary, therefore, to explain why 'dacoity' became "a hostile movement of the population." There is no doubt that the people found it less risky to help the 'dacoits' than to co-operate with the British authorities. "The only choice left to them," says Geary, "is that of dacoiting or being dacoited."<sup>3</sup> It is difficult to believe, however, that the people, who were by no means unfamiliar with the strength and organisation of British troops and the rigour of British military regulations, could be terrorised into submission for any length of time by the 'dacoits' who obviously worked under many handicaps. It seems that the policy pursued by the British authorities did something to alienate the population and to make them, in general, willing partners of the military leaders who were resisting the invaders. There are reasons to believe that the people were disappointed when Upper Burma was placed under the direct administration of British officers; after Thibaw's deposition they had expected that another prince of the royal family would be placed on the throne. The abolition of the monarchy certainly shocked their religious sentiments : "A King was considered by the people as the head

the Saging district, "It had been under the domination of brigands for years before Thebaw was dethroned. It was held by a score of dacoit leaders, who had a thousand men armed with guns at their call." (*The Pacification of Burma*, pp. 6-7, 103.)

<sup>1</sup> The mother of the *woon* of Pokoko said that "she did what she could to stop dacoity, but people had nothing to eat, and so they went about to loot." (Geary, *Burma, After the Conquest*, p. 73.)

<sup>2</sup> Geary, *Burma, After the Conquest*, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> *Burma, After the Conquest*, p. 74.

of religion, and represented God to their ideas."<sup>1</sup> The Chief Commissioner, Mr. Bernard, who was accused by Anglo-Burmans of "an extraordinary predilection for Burman ideas and sentiments", was in favour of maintaining a nominal monarchy.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, the abolition of the Hluttaw<sup>3</sup> completed the annihilation of the old order in Upper Burma. Colonel Sladen was an annexationist; it is, therefore, significant that he thought it necessary to retain the Hluttaw. The average Anglo-Burman regarded it as 'a weak and mischievous concession to Burmese opinion'.<sup>4</sup> When Lord Dufferin went to Mandalay, the Hluttaw requested him to appoint a King. The Viceroy offered the Ministers a 'marked slight' by passing them without recognition.<sup>5</sup> Sir Charles Crosthwaite betrays a curious lack of appreciation of Burmese sentiments when he says that the Burmese Ministers became 'superfluous'.<sup>6</sup> Thirdly, the sudden arrest and deportation of Tyndah, a member of the Hluttaw who had loyally and usefully served the British authorities,<sup>7</sup> created a panic. The Hluttaw sent a memorial to the Viceroy, asking for his reinstatement. Geary says that "the practical effect" of Tyndah's punishment was "the immediate development in extent and intensity of the movement which is still termed dacoity, but is really an effort to resist the conquest." To this development the "wholesome severity" of the military officers must have made some contribution.<sup>8</sup> On February 3, 1886, General Prendergast issued a

<sup>1</sup> Geary, *Burma, After the Conquest*, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Geary, *Burma, After the Conquest*, pp. 5, 140, 300.

<sup>3</sup> Council of Ministers.

<sup>4</sup> Geary, *Burma, After the Conquest*, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> Geary, *Burma, After the Conquest*, pp. 225-26.

<sup>6</sup> *The Pacification of Burma*, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> For details, see Geary, *Burma, After the Conquest*, pp. 218-229.

<sup>8</sup> "It was a matter of common observation amongst military men and civilians alike, that dacoity was more general and more dangerous in

general order stating that "it is to be clearly understood that no executions are to take place except in the case of criminals sentenced to death by civil officers."<sup>1</sup> It is significant that Sir Charles Crosthwaite, the head of the civil administration, did not like the interference of civil officers. He observes, "Much mischief may be and was done by well-intentioned but inept judicial action; neither the police nor the people knew how far they might go in defending themselves or in effecting the capture of criminals." As late as 1890 he was 'reluctant' to accept the appointment of a Judicial Commissioner for Upper Burma—an appointment which he regarded as a 'refinement.'<sup>2</sup>

January than it had been two or three weeks previously, before the shootings and floggings became so general." (Geary, *The Pacification of Burma*, p. 231.)

How the Viceroy supported the military men is clear from one of Lord Dufferin's letters to Lord Roberts, written in July, 1886, "I am very anxious that it should remain on record that from first to last we have not only not refused any demands which our officers in Burmah have addressed to us, but that we have actually forced upon them more extensive means for the subjugation of the country, in the shape of troops, etc., than they themselves demanded". (Lyall, *The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, Vol. II, p. 128.)

<sup>1</sup> Geary, *Burma, After the Conquest*, p. 248.

<sup>2</sup> *The Pacification of Burma*, pp. 52, 338-39.

## APPENDIX B

### BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS THE RED KARENNS

The following letter of appointment<sup>1</sup> was given to the Chief of the State of Eastern Karenne on January 29, 1889 :

"1. That you shall govern your State in accordance with established custom, and as a tributary to the British Queen whom you acknowledge to be your Suzerain.

2. That you shall enter into no negotiations, treaties, or agreements with any other State than England.

3. That you shall pay as tribute the sum of Rs. 5,000 yearly.

4. That you will in all matters obey the orders of the Superintendent of the Shan States.

\* \* \* \* \*

6. That no Shan, or Burman, or British subjects of any race shall be detained in any part of Eastern Karenne against their will, but that they shall have free liberty to go where they please."<sup>2</sup>

The State of Eastern Karrenne was not made part of British India. "Experience of the difficulties arising from the position of the Shan States as part of British India, and of the absence of such difficulties in the case of the feudatory States of the Central Provinces, induced the Chief Commissioner (Sir Charles Crosthwaite) to leave the Eastern Karenne State in the position of a feudatory chiefship."

<sup>1</sup> Crosthwaite, *The Pacification of Burma*, pp. 202-203.

<sup>2</sup> This clause was inserted to provide for the abolition of slavery.

## APPENDIX C

### BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS THE TRANS-SALWEEN STATES

The Government of India was not eager in 1886-87 to lay hold on more territory near Burma than it could manage without excessive cost or trouble. Lord Dufferin was very anxious to avoid China. He advised Sir Charles Crosthwaite to exercise great care in the matter of the frontiers of Upper Burma, where they touched China. "Feel your way," he said, "and when you come against anything hard, draw back." Sir Charles Crosthwaite regarded it as "advice that was most sound in dealing with the ill-defined boundaries of a conquered province." His own desire was "to hold what our predecessors had held or had been entitled to hold," and not "to leave unoccupied space for others to come in." He experienced some difficulty in giving effect to this policy in the case of the trans-Salween States. He was against stopping short of the frontier claimed by the Kings of Burma. Such a policy, he thought, would be ascribed by the newly conquered Burmese to fear and weakness. He was also afraid that the country lying between the Salween and the Mekong, if it was allowed to remain outside British control, would be "the refuge of all the discontent and outlawry of Burma." His views, however, could be assailed on various grounds. The trans-Salween territory was mountainous, unhealthy and unprofitable ; it would be rather a financial burden than a source of profit. The advance beyond the Salween would also involve the "neighbourhood of a troublesome power" (*i.e.*, China). It was better to accept the Salween as "an uncompromising natural boundary." Probably the most decisive argument that led the Government to reject

these views and to advance beyond the Salween was the apprehension that the trans-Salween States might fall under French influence. The result of leaving these States to themselves might be, says the Chief Commissioner, "to make our dominion conterminous with that of France, not on or beyond the Mekong but on the Salween itself—an intolerable position."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Crosthwaite, *The Pacification of Burma*, pp. 21-22, 210-213.

## APPENDIX D

### BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS THE SHAN STATES

The Tai or Siamese branch of the Indo-Chinese people, called Shan by the Burmese, are a distinct race which migrated from Central Asia to the valleys of the rivers Mekong, Menam, Irrawaddy and Brahmaputra.<sup>1</sup> A consolidated Shan monarchy ruled over the country of the Upper Irrawaddy for several centuries. "About the ninth century A.D. it began to break up into separate States which eventually were conquered by the Burmans."<sup>2</sup> The Burmese Kings exercised "a real, although spasmodic and irregular, control over the Shan Chiefs." These Chiefs were hereditary absolute rulers of their principalities; but they had to pay a heavy tribute to the Burmese Crown, and submit to more or less regular interference from Burmese officials. Sometimes the sons of the Chiefs were invited by the Burmese Kings "to the court of Ava at an early age, for the twofold purpose of rearing them under court influence, and of keeping them as hostages for their father's good conduct."<sup>3</sup> Many centuries ago Thutmoses III of Egypt followed the same method for the purpose of ensuring the loyalty of his Asiatic vassals.

After King Thibaw's deposition some officials of the Chinese Empire invited the Shan Chiefs to a conference at Maingmawgyi to draw up a "friendly treaty", but the latter did not respond to this invitation. They were not, however, allowed for any length of time to rejoice in their freedom from the Burmese yoke. As

<sup>1</sup> Crosthwaite, *The Pacification of Burma*, pp. 133-134.

<sup>2</sup> Phayre, *History of Burma*, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Crosthwaite, *The Pacification of Burma*, pp. 134-135. See also Mrs. Leslie Milne's *Shans At Home*, p. 186.

Sir Charles Crosthwaite observes, "The Shan chiefs and their people had to be persuaded to make submission to the Queen-Empress and to accept her as their overlord."<sup>1</sup> Military measures<sup>2</sup> had to be taken before they agreed to do so.

Soon after the annexation of Upper Burma Sir Charles Bernard, the then Chief Commissioner, laid down the main lines of the policy to be adopted towards the Shan Chiefs. They were to be left free to govern their subjects, provided they recognised British supremacy and paid a moderate tribute. With this policy Sir Charles Crosthwaite, Sir Charles Bernard's successor, was inclined to agree. Before leaving for Burma he represented to Lord Dufferin "the manner in which our relations with the feudatory chiefs in the Central Provinces<sup>3</sup> were managed and the saving in cost and responsibility to be gained by leaving them (the Shan States) quasi-independent."<sup>4</sup> Lord Dufferin approved of this policy and preferred it to annexation<sup>5</sup>.

The settlement finally made by Sir Charles Crosthwaite was somewhat different. The Shan States were not recognised as feudatory principalities outside of British India<sup>6</sup>; they were made an integral part of British India. They were, however, to be "administered not through the regular officials and courts, but directly by many quasi-independent chiefs, each supreme in his

<sup>1</sup> *The Pacification of Burma*, pp. 136-137.

<sup>2</sup> For details see Crosthwaite's *The Pacification of Burma*, Chaps. XV-XVI

<sup>3</sup> Sir Charles Crosthwaite served as Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces in 1884-85.

<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere Sir Charles Crosthwaite observes, "When we occupied the country, the condition of the Shan chiefs had more resemblance to that of the petty chiefs and Rajas of the central provinces of India before Sir Richard Temple dealt with them, than to any other Indian example." (*The Pacification of Burma*, p. 126.)

<sup>5</sup> Crosthwaite, *The Pacification of Burma*, pp. 147, 21.

<sup>6</sup> This was the position accorded by Sir Richard Temple to the larger states of Central India.

own territory, but guided and controlled by British officers, whose advice they are bound by their engagements to follow." *Sanads* were to be granted to the greater Chiefs and letters of appointment to the lesser. The greater Chiefs were authorised to deal with all legal complaints and revenue matters within their jurisdiction, and to nominate their successors with the approval of the British Government. Forests, minerals and precious stones were reserved to the British Government. The lesser Chiefs were obliged to pay the revenue assessed by, and regulate their administration according to the advice of, a British officer known as the Superintendent of the Shan States. Every Chief was required to appear in person and make a declaration of allegiance. Every Chief had to pay a tribute adjusted to his ability. All disputes arising between one State and another were to be referred to the Superintendent.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Charles Crosthwaite received the Shan Chiefs in a *durbar*, held on March 19, 1890, at Fort Stedman and explained to them in detail the implications of British policy. About administrative reforms he said, "I do not want you to imitate or adopt the forms or methods of British Government; but I think you can do much by a careful choice of your subordinates, by the judicious curtailment of the right to carry arms, by suppressing the extravagant and public gambling which, experience shows, invariably leads first to ruin and then to crime."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Crosthwaite, *The Pacification of Burma*, pp. 126, 161-162, 125.

<sup>2</sup> Crosthwaite, *The Pacification of Burma*, p. 125.

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6. Secret Letters from Court of Directors and Secretary of State, 1826—1880.

These documents constitute my principal source of information for Chapters II—VIII. Chapter I is based on my book, *The Eastern Frontier of British India*. For full references to sources for Chap. I, see the *Bibliography* appended to that book.

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#### 1. Parliamentary Papers.

The *Papers* relating to the Second Burmese War, presented to Parliament in 1852 and in 1853, give full details about diplomatic negotiations as well as military and naval operations. In some cases important facts have been suppressed, but such suppressions can be detected from the unpublished documents mentioned above.

The *Papers* relating to King Thibaw's reign, presented to Parliament in 1886, constitute my principal source of information for the events narrated in Chapter IX, for the unpublished documents relating to the period after 1886, preserved in the Imperial

Record Department, are not yet available for purposes of research.

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This book contains many letters written by Lord Dalhousie to Sir George Couper, 'his oldest and dearest friend.' Some letters relate to Burma. They give us the 'private' views of the Governor-General and sometimes enable us to detect omissions in the *Parliamentary Papers*.

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This book contains many letters written (1) by Lord Dalhousie to Sir Arthur Phayre, the first British Commissioner of Pegu, (2) by Sir Arthur Phayre to Lord Dalhousie, and (3) by Thomas Spears, British Agent at the Burmese capital, to Sir Arthur Phayre. These letters throw a flood of light on Lord Dalhousie's policy towards Burma.

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